Technology is God

The Definitive Edition

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Dedicated to my mother and my father, for everything you have and have not done for me.

"This is it! Atheists and believers, nihilists and God freaks should wake up right now and realise that there is reason to think that the Singularity is the end of the human era that has been anticipated by the great monotheistic religions. Correctly understood, the Singularity is the scientific redemption of the God hypothesis." - Mitchell Heisman, *Suicide Note*, self-published, 2010, p. 43

First of all, thank you for picking up this book. Whether you downloaded it or somehow got a physical copy of it, I appreciate you reading. Generally speaking, there are very few people interested in this kind of discourse these days, and even fewer people are interested in hearing other people's ideas, be they original or recycled. If you are not interested in such discussions, I guess you can go back to watching your favorite monotonous ideologue on YouTube or Twitch. If you are interested, stick with me and I assure you will come out of this book with more questions than what you came in with (even if those questions are concerning my sanity).

I would like to preface this work by saying I am versed in Technology, although not as much as others, and have based this work mostly on that knowledge. I do not have any base in theology. The citations and quotes used have sometimes been modified to fit my exact needs of interpretation, but I have made sure to never take them out of context. There are also some ideas which are not mine, yet I cannot attribute to named sources, so I will just refer to them anonymously.

If at any point you feel like I may be rambling, feel free to put this book down. Not finishing a book is something I have avoided in the past, but I soon learned that it was necessary for one's well-being. The first time I did not finish a book was *A Little Life*[I]. I just found that it was pity porn for weak hearts. I am going to avoid making the reader feel stupid, weak or disoriented in this book.

I could make this book 500 pages long, but I really do not want to bullshit you for that long. I do not enjoy the sound of my own voice (in this case the look of my handwriting, I guess?) that much. If you want to be subjected to such bullshit, you can look for it on your national political news channels. In general, I would describe this anti-Technology (or better yet contra-technological) movement (although, it is not much of a movement, is it?) as also anti-political and anti-politics, and therefore also anti-bullshit. I also want to keep it short to perhaps offer you, dear reader, the option to read this book again. I find the concepts in this book incredibly complex and yet so compelling that they deserve to be understood, and even I had issues comprehending some of these concepts and had to reread them multiple times.

I would also like to say that, if any of this book is based in reality, I am also just as guilty of all of the sins I critique in this book as anyone else; from pride all the way to sloth. And this truth also applies to anyone that tries to give you advice. Once someone gives you advice on something, you can be certain that they are personally doing the exact opposite. Those millionaires on YouTube that tell you how to get rich are all in debt. Those Twitch streamers that associate with communism are all the biggest capitalists of the world. The gurus that tell you to pursue your education all dropped out of college with student loan debt to pay off afterwards. The fitness influencers all take steroids or other PEDs. The more you come to know about these people and their deception, the more you dislike them.

[I] *See* Hanya Yanagihara, *A Little Life*, Doubleday, 2015.

I started writing and thinking about this book back in 2020, after the COVID-19 pandemic motivated quarantine had shown some signs of relenting, especially during the summertime. I have already thought a lot about how that year had effected me, my family and my community. I was particularly young at the time, so I did have some rebellious ideas that I now find stupid.

In the very early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, some of the more fortunate people on this planet got a glimpse into life without total technological control. Employers could not contact their employees (namely my father and mother) for a couple of weeks, while they were setting everything up, and schools were out for more than a month here in Italy before they were armed with proper tools for the so-called *didattica a distanza* (which actually never happened due to corruption and misuse of funds[II]). In those weeks, I worked out, read books and was also able to spend lots of very important time with my parents and my twin brother. We could not really go anywhere, but we had fun around the house, and the weather was nice too, so we would just chill in the garden usually. Those were great times, I believe.

But already back then, I had started wrestling with simple ideas at first, like the ethics of consumer electronics production, specifically smartphones. That was around the time that Fairphone as a company had started gaining some traction here in Europe, and also when we stopped receiving news about the Foxconn facility and suicides or even attempted suicides[III]. I bought a Fairphone because my old Sony, which had been passed down to me by my father, had given out. I do not think it is a coincidence that phone had hit four years of age that exact week. So, I bought that phone looking for something different, finally. I heard about how it was easily repairable and environmentally friendly[IV] (if such a thing really exists). Even then, China had already largely owned the means of production for electronics (and Fairphone was no different[V]), and then the pandemic and the chip shortage hit us like a speeding bullet to Heaven. But, even in this, I was extremely pessimistic. While I did not (and still do not) find buying Chinese-made electronics a morally sound option, the alternative South Korean products produced by their dystopian technofeudalist government (we will get back to this in parentheses) under the cerberic dominion of the Samsung conglomerate is even worse[VI].

It was also not long after my twin brother had decided out of the blue to go vegan. He enlightened me in certain ways about industrial farming and the way we treat animals (did you know that some farm animals never get to see daylight or even the sky, as they are permanently indoors?[VII]), but I just did not believe that not eating products of animal origin was the best solution to that problem (maybe that was my internalization of cannibalism, which I will get onto later). I was not familiar with research conducted on veganism and aging (and how those two relate), and I am still not familiar with it to this day. I am sure he knows more about it now, given that he is well on his way to becoming an M.D. (although, strangely enough, most doctors make horrible decisions relating to their own health). It was hard for him at first, but he slowly adapted and that process declouded his self-esteem, making him feel as if he took the ethically correct yet very difficult choice. I admired him for that. I could never make such a drastic decision.

[II] *See* Francesca Galici, *Ammucchiati in cataste fuori da scuola: ecco la fine dei banchi a rotelle*, Il Giornale, 2023.

[III] *See* Jamie Condliff, *Foxconn Is Under Scrutiny for Worker Conditions. It's Not the First Time.*, New York Times, 2018.

[IV] *See* Greenpeace, *Guide to Greener Electronics*, 2017.

[V] *See* Olivier Hebert, *The path to finding our new production partner: Hi-P*, Fairphone, 2015.

[VI] *See* Chico Harlan, *In South Korea, the Republic of Samsung*, The Washington Post, 2012.

[VII] *See* Kriss MacDonald, *Dairy cows who see daylight (unlike too many)*, Wild About Here, 2015.

This was around the time when my father had brought a brand new BMW. He ordered it exactly the way he wanted to, customized it precisely to his liking. He spent a lot of time thinking about that car. But every time I asked him post-purchase why he wanted it, he could not give me a satisfactory answer. It was most definitely objectively newer, bigger, safer (although its safe distance sensor still had lots of issues) and more stylish, much like he said. But for some reason those answers did not make sense to me. It was more comfortable (at least for the driver) and fuel efficient than the old one. But even the advantages it had he did not really use properly.

The new one may have been more spacious, but that space was not often utilised, because my father was incredibly proud of that car. He did not want to dirty the carpet in the trunk space, so he would not let the dog get in (nor would he put anything remotely dirty in there). He insisted that he had bought it because the old car's suspension was now too low for him, and this one was easier to get into (which data suggests to be the reason most tell themselves to purchase an SUV[VIII]), since he had hit his 50s and was now experiencing Father Time's (we will get back to this personification later) gentle touch. Instead of seeing a doctor for his hip and lower back pain, he bought a brand new car that was easier to get in and out of. It had become crystal clear to me. No; the reason he wanted (then was extremely proud of) that new car is because he wanted change.

[VIII] *See* Jean-Michel Normand, *Les SUV, plus gros et plus polluants, sont désormais les véhicules les plus vendus en Europe*, Le Monde, 2023.

Giacomo Poretti, Italian comedian, actor, and director, held a very interesting TEDx talk about change and our obsession with it[IX]. I recommend checking it out. It also makes a lot of contextual sense, given his working field. As a comedian, his currency is novelty, because a joke you have heard ten times will not make you laugh any more. Politics is perhaps the only field where novelty does not matter. The average voter will vote for the same ideals that their parents voted for. Both the Left and the Right still try to sell us the same principles they sold to the baby boomers.

But regardless, what I had learned through that new car ordeal is that we are always looking for novelty, in all fields of reality. And in most fields, novelty coincides with a reckless search for progress. That is why we want to advance (so to speak, although we will discuss this term later on); because we get bored very easily. And therefore boredom is simply a manifestation of the absence of novelty. The only thing that can satisfy our need for novelty is a constant fear of death, therefore an essential search for survival. To quote Romanian philosopher Emil Cioran:

> "A zoologist who observed gorillas in their native habitat was amazed by the uniformity of their life and their vast idleness. Hours and hours without doing anything. Was boredom unknown to them? This is indeed a question raised by a human, a busy ape. Far from fleeing monotony, animals crave it, and what they most dread is to see it end. For it ends, only to be replaced by fear, the cause of all activity. Inaction is divine; yet it is against inaction that man has rebelled. Man alone, in nature, is incapable of enduring monotony, man alone wants something to happen at all costs—something, anything... Thereby he shows himself unworthy of his ancestor: the need for novelty is the characteristic of an alienated gorilla."[X]

We can get back to this idea once we step on the theme of human evolution. But if novelty is the driving force behind every and all things we do and the way we do them, then novelty, in the end, becomes God.

Now, I have never been religious[XI]. In fact, I never understood the older generations' obsession with God or with His word. Both of my grandmothers (who thankfully are both still with us when I write this) have always been religious, particularly both Catholics. And you cannot reason with people who idolize martyrdom, because there is nothing that they are willing to do to reduce their suffering. But I digress. To take an excerpt out of Mitchell Heisman's suicide note,

> "God is the greatest greatness; the most potent conception of absolute perfection, absolute power, and absolute goodness ever conceived of by the human mind. A being conceived so that nothing greater can be conceived. This being isn't greater than anything conceivable, however, if it only existed in the intellect – its actual existence would be greater."[XII]

If, therefore, novelty existed in a form outside of our intellect, it would be the sole motivator of the universe. Imagine something so incredible that every time you looked at it, you would be dumbfounded by how new and how innovative it is.

[IX] *See* Giacomo Poretti, *L'insostenibile desiderio di cambiare*, TEDxMilano, 2019.

[X] Emil Cioran, *The Trouble With Being Born*, Arcade Publishing, 1998, p. unk., English translation by Richard Howard

[XI] In this paragraph I violate (or infect, so to speak) the word "religious" with the pagan meaning of devotion and worship.

[XII] Mitchell Heisman, *Suicide Note*, self-published, 2010, p. 33

Think back to when you were a child (if, unlike me, you can remember something of those times). If you were lucky, you got at least one new toy on Christmas (or its equivalent which you celebrated). That new toy kept you so occupied for as long as it had you interested that you could close out the rest of the world using it and your imagination. That toy had so much novelty that you could not take your eyes off of it. Now imagine you buy your child a toy so infinitely new that they inexplicably become obsessed with it to the point where it is all they currently and will ever care about. They become blinded by its novelty forever. Humanity is, generally speaking, blinded by novelty[XIII].

I am sure anyone that has gone to college and/or university has had this same feeling or train of thought before about novelty. You show up to the first couple of classes in your new course and you're amazed by the things that you learn in those first lessons. Then, as time goes on, and as concepts get more difficult, you lose interest. If we could somehow encapsulate that novelty into one field of reality, we would get a being that is both all-powerful and omni-motivating (*monos* & *demiurgos*). And that concept or field of reality is progress.

Progress means "forward or onward movement towards a certain destination"[XIV]. It is therefore elevation onto a same field. We move towards novelty in all its forms, particularly in our search for progress and advancement. Notice how the definition never includes any moral or complimentary meaning. Progress does not imply the bettering of any standard, it is simply an abstract movement towards a particular ideal (*telos*). We do not look for progress to make our lives easier or more enjoyable (note that these two do not coincide), but simply because we want to.

This is exactly what famous Italian philosopher, poet, and painter Julius Evola states in his most famous work, *Revolt Against The Modern World*, which I shall now quote, despite his close association to Fascist Italy.

> "No idea is as absurd as the idea of progress, which together with its corollary notion of the superiority of modern civilization, has created its own "positive" alibis by falsifying history, by insinuating harmful myths in people's minds, and by proclaiming its sovereignty at the crossroads of the plebeian ideology from which it originated."[XV]

And, therefore, what can be more novel and more motivating of progress than Technology (and in this, I shall recycle Mikhail Bakunin's writing to say that if progress truly existed, it would be necessary to abolish it[XVI])?

Starting off from progress, who said technological progress is betterment under any form? Therefore, what makes us accept the fact that technological progress necessarily benefits us? If it does not benefit us, who does it benefit? Certainly not the animals whose homes were destroyed by urban renewal, or the marine species that go extinct every year because of microplastics in their food.

Furthering this question, who says Technology serves us and not the opposite? I was talking to a friend about his health practices. He is a nice guy, but I feel he is a bit of a hypochondriac. And I asked him a question: When do your decisions serve you and when is the opposite the

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[XIII] As a side note, this is often why I oppose giving children (especially under the age of say, 13 years old) any electronic devices with an internet connection.

[XIV] Oxford Languages

[XV] Giulio Cesare Andrea Evola, *Revolt Against The Modern World*, Inner Traditions International, 1995, p. 30, English translation by Guido Stucco

[XVI] *See* Mikhail Alexandrovich Bakunin, *God and the State*, marxists.org, 1871, ch. 2.

case? What I meant by that was: When your decisions benefit your health, is there a point where they no longer benefit you? Can you serve your health more than your health can serve you? Can we serve Technology more than It can serve us? I will give you one simple example. The United States of America currently has more parking spaces than people, and far more than the cars present in the United States. Specifically, the amount of parking spaces is at least two and a half times that of the number of registered cars in the United States[XVII]. So why do they keep being built? Because they are not meant to serve the people, but Technology.

Taking off from that example, only certain forms of Technology are disallowed, and the ones that are not are allowed just because they can exert control over the poorer classes. Television is allowed, because it makes the poor progressively dumber[XVIII] (and that's not even considering propaganda by state-controlled channels[XIX]). Notice the development of facial recognition tech[XX], while companies focused on privacy, like BlackBerry, slip into bankruptcy. Meanwhile, marijuana (which I consider to be both a crucial form of psychotropic and pain medication), piracy (which is *per definitio* distribution of information and entertainment for free), and other forms of this so-called theological freedom are illegal. But I digress.

And the same concepts can be implied in faith, religion and God. Think about it. Suppose that God does exist out there, and whether He is benevolent or not, we can agree He will be the sole motivator of the way we do things and the reason behind why we do them. Every and all things we do (under the Christian narrative) is part of God's narrative He created for us. If that kind of omnimotivation is true, we can already state that Technology is God in its every form.

Why do scientists boat across oceans to study rare animals and scrutinize their cells under a microscope? Why do we strive for technological advancement and/or progress? Who says that if God is not benevolent (or maybe even omnimalevolent[XXI]) we do not end up pleasing Him somehow? The Ancient Greeks often sacrificed animals to their gods, even though some of them were considered malevolent, or deeply anti-human (and even though the theory that they did not truly believe in their gods is ever present[XXII]).

Technology is the greatest omnimotivator humanity has ever found. If you asked a priest why life is good or why we needed to exert dominion over every field of reality, they would simply respond that it is because of God.

And taking off from the priest theme, why do we praise Elon Musk like he is the Pope? We mostly let him do whatever he wants, and we praise his actions too. The moment I heard he had developed plans for the Neuralink project (which was a project entirely based on neural microchip implants), I knew we had entered some sort of dystopia. How do we know that those microchips will serve us and not the other way around? Not only that, people were lining up online to get one of those cool new implants. And Harvard was doing the same thing[XXIII]. But I digress.

[XVII] *See* Colin Woodward, *America Has as Many as 2 Billion Parking Spaces*, And They're Ruining Our Cities, Jalopnik, 2023.

[XVIII] *See* Nicholas Bakalar, *Can TV Dumb You Down?*, The New York Times, 2019.

[XIX] *Consider for example* Eva Bognar, *Hungary Digital News Report*, Reuters, 2022.

[XX] *Consider for example* Alfred Ng, *How China uses facial recognition to control human behavior*, CNET, 2020.

[XXI] *See* John Zande, *The Owner of All Infernal Names: An Introductory Treatise on the Existence, Nature & Government of our Omnimalevolent Creator*, CreateSpace, 2015.

[XXII] *See* Paul Veyne, *Did the Greeks Believe in Their Myths?: An Essay on the Constitutive Imagination*, University of Chicago Press, 1988, English translation by Paula Wissing.

[XXIII] *See* Haley Bridger, *Microneedle pill takes the sting out of insulin*, The Harvard Gazette, 2019.

Now let me propose this same example, except this time you will query a scientist. Why is life good (otherwise, why is life meaningful?) and why do we exert dominion over every field of reality (otherwise, why do we study planets that are so far away, we no longer know if they still exist)? It is because of Technology.

And once that logic is in place, there can be nothing more correct and more righteous and greater than God, or in our case Technology. And how could Technology not be the greatest and the most correct? A computer (or rather, a common operating machine) is only capable of providing objectively correct answers (at least given the circumstances and the operational fields provided).

In the end, I came to this sort of enlightenment (although that term exaggerates what actually happened) when I temporarily went back to using a regular cellphone (now referred to as a dumbphone). That decision was mostly down to me not wanting to live with the distractions of a smartphone and with the degrading ethics of social media platforms (*nota bene*, I considered the platforms themselves the problem, not their users). When I made that change, I remember my peers (specifically somewhat close friends) looked at me insulted. They looked at me as if I had renounced my religion, or even worse, denounced their faith in Technology.

I truly wonder if all civilizations across the universe (if they exist; the theory that we may be alone is ever present) tend to this God of ours: Technology. What makes us think that if we encountered an equally or superiorly intelligent species somewhere in the universe they would have any idea of what Technology (or even better, any idea of concepts far more radical, like violence for example) is? Better yet, what if they had already renounced this faith as harmful and ignorant? This of course presumes they would have some kind of conception of language, which we will get to later. And the same question can be posed for us. Who says one of us humans had not already discovered this God millennia ago, then chose to reject It or hide It?

And along this same line, I believe the most logical conclusion of the Fermi paradox[XXIV] to be crystal clear. If you are unfamiliar with the Fermi paradox, it is simply the attempt at rationalizing the absolute and total lack of conclusive evidence supporting the presence of advanced extraterrestrial life in the universe despite the undeniably high possibility of it existing. The uncomfortable truth is that either no extraterrestrial lifeform has gotten past the interplanetary communication barrier (either because they simply lack the intellectual and/or mechanical skill to do so or because they have already rejected Technology) or because shortly after crossing that same barrier, the creatures destroyed their own planet by making it unfit for their own existence (and this could happen in a multitude of ways, really)[XXV]. This is a very desperately absolutist conclusion, but it sure seems to coincide with the path we are currently on and also with what we know of the universe.

I also propose this: Technology and the realities of late-stage modern living have now made even us deeply anti-human. When you are disconnected from Nature, you tend to idolize it. Disconnection makes us anti-human (and anti-life in general), because we forget that we are truly dependent on our planet Earth to sustain us. Animals are fundamentally stupid[XXVI], because they cannot conceive new ideas, only replicate those they already have (dogma at its purest), those being the ideas of survival and reproduction. But in this sense, they are more connected with their environment than our intelligence could ever make us. I realized this when

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[XXIV] *See* Eric M. Jones, *"Where Is Everybody?" An Account of Fermi's Question*, Los Alamos, 1985.

[XXV] And I still support the notion that the most frightening thing we could discover on another planet would be humans (or, even worse, the decrepit technological remains of a past anthropocentric civilization).

[XXVI] *See* Ernest Becker, *The Denial of Death*, Free Press (Macmillan Publishing Co.), 1973, p. 26.

I watched the film *American Psycho*[XXVII] together with a friend.

When Patrick Bateman stabbed and killed the homeless guy (which I still sustain was out of frustration, not out of anger or bloodlust), she did not get upset. However she got visibly shaken by the fact that the protagonist also kicked, then stomped, the homeless man's dog to death. And when Pat Bateman grabbed that kitten off the street, she was already wincing in agony and suspense. Why? Why had she not gotten upset about a human being murdered in cold blood, yet got extremely upset at the wrong man putting his hands (or rather, his leather gloves) even softly on a kitten?

My only answer to these questions is that technological advancement has worked against humanity, and that it has dissociated and alienated us from Nature, to the point where we do not even recognize Nature when we see it. In relation to other species, we tend to believe that we, as humans, are the domesticators by definition. But pay attention! Just because a pattern is present, that does not mean the pattern holds true in all situations you can feed it. In other words, the fact that we domesticate other species like cats and dogs does not make us domesticators by definition. We can be domesticated too, and that is exactly what has happened in the recent pandemic. Even domestication is used against us these days, as in the animals which we have domesticated have become means to authoritarian regimes and anti-human sentiments (a banal example is that of police dogs, but I also suspect there is something deeply anti-human in pro-pitbull movements).

To propose a more political example (of which I am by no means an expert, yet I can see through politicians' bullshit when I see it): Why do we insist on pro-abortion laws (*nota bene*, I am not taking a stance on this, I am not a moralist here, people may do what they want)? Reproduction could just as easily be halted by contraceptive pills (or, in reference to men, contraceptive devices or even operations), if even one of the parties decides they do not want to conceive. The reason is because we are deeply (and perhaps closetedly) anti-human.

Now, that is not motive enough to blame ourselves. Nature itself (and the same can be said for humanity) is not innately nice. The personification of Nature as Mother Nature is a double-edged sword. A mother is life-giving, therefore brings non-sentient beings into existence, where they eventually blossom into conscious beings. Yet, women are often naive and irrational. Once you think about childbirth in a disconnected way, you realize that it is one of the most horrifying and painful (both for the mother and the child, even without considering additional procedures such as a Caesarean section or circumcision) in nature. The mother suffers tremendously through the nine months before the birth and the child suffers just as much in the close-to-a-century-long life they will most likely live. Praising childbirth (though, I must say, data and Science are slowly doing away with even this banal concept of reproduction[XXVIII]) is fundamentally void of logic, and therefore simply irrational. If Nature were a father, say Father Time, Nature would be perhaps characterized by disillusion and incredible wisdom. But even that concept of wisdom is deeply repulsive and pagan in nature. It is ultimately the real quality which embodies and best describes annoyingness as a trait. A wise man will have a retort to everything. Father Time is a nagging old scumbag that must constantly remind you of his existence. Jesus Christ was deeply unwise[XXIX]. But I digress.

[XXVII] *See* Mary Harron & Guinevere Turner, *American Psycho*, Lionsgate Films, 2000.

[XXVIII] *Consider* Antonella Cinelli, Gavin Jones, & John Stonestreet, *Births in Italy heading for new record low in 2023 - stats office*, Reuters, 2023.

[XXIX] *See* Tremper Longman III, Mark L. Strauss, & Daniel Taylor, *Expanded Bible (EXB)*, Thomas Nelson Bibles, 2011, 1 Corinthians 1:17-31.

This is where the naivety of Mother Nature is truly revealed. Mother Nature gifts us existence. We do not really love existence, do we? We are bothered by even the smallest inconveniences, and we feel empty when we cannot satisfy our duties or our basic needs. And the same thing can be said about God. To quote Heisman again:

> "The potentially fatal assumption of this argument is that existence is superior to non-existence. The erroneous assumption that existence is superior to non-existence, or that life is superior to death, is a bias that has a strong basis in human evolutionary psychology. If, unlike myself, someone were to assume that even human existence is superior to non-existence, then death would be ranked inferior to life. The transhumanist quest for immortality, and all ways of enhancing life beyond present human limits, moreover, would follow from the assumption that existence is superior to non-existence. The Biblical God, in a similar manner, evolved out of an extreme extrapolation of the logic of human life."[XXX]

And in all that, the logic of human life is undeniably governed by novelty.

Two ideas are hard-wired into our minds. We believe existence is good and that bringing people into existence is a positive thing, not because of rational thinking but because of a deep desire to prolong our genetic identity. Genes (as in *mimema*[XXXI]) make us think this way (we will get to that later), because this is how genetic evolution progresses. Without these ideas, an organism kills itself and does not produce offspring. Genes die, and genes' innate purpose (much like species', but that is still being debated) is to continue.

People always took their lives. Some cultures even claimed it virtuous in certain situations. Not only that, the most virtuous ways of suicide were the most brutal and terrifying ways to kill oneself. The ritual of *seppuku* was a voluntary disembowelment to protect one's code of honor. The *jauhar* was also extremely violent. Women would set themselves on fire in order to escape certain defeat during a war, after which they would most certainly be raped and enslaved.

So to put suicide down to modernity and its consequences would be foolish. Sure, we have made huge "progress" (or, more correctly, changes) over the years thanks to doubters who kept tearing down ideals and replacing them with new ones. The general ideals about the value of life and birth remained the same, though. The question is: Are these values transcendental? Or rather, do they effect only us, or God too?

To quote Slovene philosopher and researcher Slavoj Žižek (and some of Martin Heidegger's works), who I highly repute in his theological studies:

> "The key question about religion today is: can all religious experiences and practices effectively be contained within this dimension of the conjunction of truth and meaning? The best starting point for such a line of inquiry is the point at which religion itself faces a trauma, a shock which dissolves the link between truth and meaning, a truth so traumatic that it resists being integrated into the universe of meaning. Every theologian sooner or later faces the problem of how to reconcile the existence of God with the fact of shoah or similar excessive evil: how are we to reconcile the existence of an omnipotent and good God with the terrifying suffering of millions of innocents, like children killed in the gas chambers? Surprisingly (or not), the theological answers build a strange succession of Hegelian triads. First, those who

[XXX] Mitchell Heisman, *Suicide Note*, self-published, 2010, p.33

[XXXI] *See* Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene*, Oxford University Press, 1976.

want to leave divine sovereignty unimpaired and thus have to attribute to God full responsibility for *shoah*, first offer the "legalistic" sin-and-punishment theory (*shoah* has to be a punishment for the past sins of humanity – or Jews themselves); then, they pass to the "moralistic" character-education theory (*shoah* is to be understood along the lines of the story of Job, as the most radical test of our faith in God – if we survive this ordeal, our character will stand firm. . .); and, finally, they take refuge in a kind of "infinite judgement" which should save the day after all common measure between *shoah* and its meaning breaks down, the divine mystery theory (facts like *shoah* bear witness to the unfathomable abyss of divine will). In accordance with the Hegelian motto of a redoubled mystery (the mystery God is for us has to be also a mystery for God Himself), the truth of this "infinite judgement" can only be to deny God's full sovereignty and omnipotence. The next triad is thus composed of those who, unable to combine *shoah* with God's omnipotence (how could He have allowed it to happen?), opt for some form of divine limitation: first, God is directly posited as finite or, at least, contained, not omnipotent, not all-encompassing: He finds himself overwhelmed by the dense inertia of His own creation; then, this limitation is reflected back into God Himself as His free act: God is self-limited, He voluntarily constrained His power in order to leave the space open for human freedom, so it is us, humans, who are fully responsible for the evil in the world – in short, phenomena like *shoah* are the ultimate price we have to pay for the divine gift of freedom; finally, self-limitation is externalized, the two moments are posited as autonomous - God is embattled, there is a counter-force or principle of demoniac Evil active in the world (the dualistic solution).

This brings us to the third position above and beyond the first two (the sovereign God, the finite God), that of a suffering God: not a triumphalist God who always wins at the end, although "His ways are mysterious," since he secretly pulls all the strings; not a God who exerts cold justice, since he is by definition always right; but a God who – like the suffering Christ on the Cross - is agonized, assumes the burden of suffering, in solidarity with the human misery. It was already Schelling who wrote:

> "God is a life, not merely a being. But all life has a fate and is subject to suffering and becoming. /.../ Without the concept of a humanly suffering God /.../ all of history remains incomprehensible."

Why? Because God's suffering implies that He is involved in history, affected by it, not just a transcendent Master pulling the strings from above: God's suffering means that human history is not just a theater of shadows, but the place of the real struggle, the struggle in which the Absolute itself is involved and its fate is decided. This is the philosophical background of Dietrich Bonhoffer's deep insight that, after *shoah*, "only a suffering God can help us now" – a proper supplement to Heidegger's "Only a God can still save us!" from his last interview. One should therefore take the statement that "the unspeakable suffering of the six millions is also the voice of the suffering of God" quite literally: the very excess of this suffering over any "normal" human measure makes it divine. Recently, this paradox was succinctly formulated by Juergen Habermas:

> "Secular languages which only eliminate the substance once intended leave

> irritations. When sin was converted to culpability, and the breaking of divine commands to an offense against human laws, something was lost."

Which is why the secular-humanist reactions to phenomena like *shoah* or gulag (AND others) is experienced as insufficient: in order to be at the level of such phenomena, something much stronger is needed, something akin to the old religious topic of a cosmic perversion or catastrophe in which the world itself is "out of joint" - when one confronts a phenomenon like *shoah*, the only appropriate reaction is the perplexed question "Why did the heavens not darken?" (the title of Arno Mayor's book). Therein resides the paradox of the theological significance of *shoah*: although it is usually conceived as the ultimate challenge to theology (if there is a God and if He is good, how could He have allowed such a horror to take place?), it is at the same time only theology which can provide the frame enabling us to somehow approach the scope of this catastrophe – the fiasco of God is still the fiasco of GOD.

Recall the second of Benjamin's *Theses on the Philosophy of History*:

> "The past carries with it a temporal index by which it is referred to redemption. There is a secret agreement between past generations and the present one."

Can this "weak messianic power" still be asserted in the face of *shoah*? How does *shoah* point towards redemption-to-come? Is not the suffering of the victims of *shoah* a kind of absolute expenditure which cannot ever be retroactively accounted for, redeemed, rendered meaningful? It is as this very point that God's suffering enters: what it signals is the failure of any *Aufhebung* of the raw fact of suffering. What echoes here is, more than the Jewish tradition, the basic Protestant lesson: there is no direct access to freedom/autonomy; between the master/slave exchange-relationship of man and God and the full assertion of human freedom, an intermediary stage of absolute humiliation has to intervene in which man is reduced to a pure object of the unfathomable divine caprice. Do the three main versions of Christianity not form a kind of Hegelian triad? In the succession of Orthodoxy, Catholicism, and Protestantism, each new term is a subdivision, split off of a previous unity. This triad of Universal-Particular-Singular can be designated by three representative founding figures (John, Peter, Paul) as well as by three races (Slavic, Latin, German). In the Eastern Orthodoxy, we have the substantial unity of the text and the corpus of believers, which is why the believers are allowed to interpret the sacred Text, the Text goes on and lives in them, it is not outside the living history as its exempted standard and model - the substance of religious life is the Christian community itself. Catholicism stands for radical alienation: the entity which mediates between the founding sacred Text and the corpus of believers, the Church, the religious Institution, regains its full autonomy. The highest authority resides in the Church, which is why the Church has the right to interpret the Text; the Text is read during the Mass in Latin, a language which is not understood by ordinary believers, and it is even considered a sin for an ordinary believer to read the Text directly, by-passing the priest's guidance. For Protestantism, finally, the only authority is the Text itself, and the wager is on every believer's direct contact with Word of God as it was delivered in the Text; the mediator (the Particular) thus disappears, withdraws into insignificance, enabling

the believer to adopt the position of a "universal Singular," the individual in a direct contact with the divine Universality, by-passing the mediating role of the particular Institution. These three Christian attitudes also involve three different modes of God's presence in the world. We start with the created universe directly reflecting the glory of its Creator: all the wealth and beauty of our world bears witness to the divine creative power, and creatures, when they are not corrupted, naturally turn their eyes towards Him... Catholicism shifts to a more delicate logic of the "figure in the carpet": the Creator is not which directly present in the world, His traces are rather to be discerned in details which escape the first superficial glance, i.e., God is like a painter who withdraws from his finished product, signaling his authorship merely by a barely discerning signature at the picture's edge. Finally, Protestantism asserts God's radical absence from the created universe, from this gray world which runs as a blind mechanism and where God's presence only becomes discernible in direct interventions of his Grace which disturbs the normal course of things.

This reconciliation, however, only becomes possible after alienation is brought to the extreme: in contrast to the Catholic notion of a caring and loving God with whom one can communicate, negotiate even, Protestantism starts with the notion of God deprived of any "common measure" shared with man, of God as an impenetrable Beyond who distributes grace in a totally contingent way. /.../

Martin Luther directly proposed an excremental identity of man: man is like a divine shit, he fell out of God's anus. One can, of course, pursue the question into how the deep crises that pushed Luther towards his new theology, he was caught in a violent debilitating superego cycle: the more he acted, repented, punished and tortured himself, did good deeds, etc., the more he felt guilty. This made him convinced that good deeds are calculated, dirty, selfish: far from pleasing God, they provoke God's wrath and lead to damnation. Salvation comes from faith: it is our faith alone, faith into Jesus as saviour, which allows us to break out of the superego impasse. However, his "anal" definition of man cannot be reduced to a result of this superego pressure which pushed him towards self-abasement – there is more in it: it is only within this Protestant logic of man's excremental identity that the true meaning of Incarnation can be formulated. In Orthodoxy, Christ ultimately loses his exceptional status: his very idealization, elevation to a noble model, reduces him to an ideal image, a figure to be imitated (all men should strive to become God) - *imitatio Christi* is more an Orthodox than a Catholic formula. In Catholicism, the predominant logic is that of a symbolic exchange: Catholic theologists enjoy dwelling in scholastic juridical arguments about how Christ paid the price for our sins, etc. – no wonder that Luther reacted to the lowest outcome of this logic, the reduction of redemption to something that can be bought from the Church. Protestantism, finally, posits the relationship as real, conceiving Christ as a God who, in his act of Incarnation, freely identified Himself with His own shit, with the excremental real that is man – and it is only at this level that the properly Christian notion of divine love can be apprehended, as the love for the miserable excremental entity called "man."

It is in this sense that, with regard to Christ, Hegel points forward to some key Kierkegaardian motifs (the difference between genius and apostle, the singular evental character of Christ) with his emphasis on the difference between Socrates and Christ.

Christ is NOT like the Greek "plastic individual" through whose particular features the universal/substantial content directly transpires (as is exemplarily the case with Alexander). What this means is that although Christ is Man-God, the direct identity of the two, this identity also implies absolute contradiction: there is NOTHING "divine" about Christ, even nothing exceptional – if we observe his features, he is indistinguishable from any other human individual:

> "If we consider Christ only in reference to his talents, his character and his morality, as a teacher, etc., we are putting him on the same plane as Socrates and others, even if we place him higher from the moral point of view. /. . . / If Christ is only taken as an exceptionally fine individual, even as one without sin, then we are ignoring the representation of the speculative idea, its absolute truth."

These lines rely on a very precise conceptual background. It is not that Christ is "more" than other model figures of religious or philosophical or ethical wisdom, real or mythical (Buddha, Socrates, Moses, Mohammad), "divine" in the sense of the absence of any human failures. With Christ, the very relationship between the substantial divine content and its representation changes: Christ does not represent this substantial divine content, God, he directly IS God, which is why he no longer has to resemble God, to strive to be perfect and "like God." Recall the classic Marx brothers joke:

> - You resemble Emmanuel Ravelli.
> - But I am Emmanuel Ravelli.
> - No wonder, then, that you resemble yourself!

The underlying premise of this joke is that such an overlapping of being and resembling is impossible, there is always a gap between the two. Buddha, Socrates, etc., resemble Gods, while Christ IS God. So when the Christian God "manifests himself to other men as an individual man, exclusive and single /. . . / like a man excluding all others," we are dealing with the singularity of a pure event, with contingency brought to extreme – only in this mode, excluding all effort to approach universal perfection, God can incarnate Itself. This absence of any positive characteristics, this full identity of God and man at the level of properties, can only occur because another, more radical, difference makes any positive differential features irrelevant. This change can be nicely rendered as the shift from the upwards-movement of the becoming-essential of the accident to the downwards-movement of the becoming-accidental of the essence: the Greek hero, this "exemplary individual," elevates his accidental personal features into a paradigmatic case of the essential universality, while in the Christian logic of Incarnation, the universal Essence embodies itself in an accidental individual.

Another way to make this point is to say that the Greek Gods appear to humans in human form, while the Christian God appears as human TO HIMSELF. This is the crucial point: Incarnation is for Hegel not a move by means of which God makes himself accessible/visible to humans, but a move by means of which Gods looks at himself from the (distorting) human perspective:

> "As God manifests himself to his own gaze, the specular presentation divides the divine self from itself, offering the divine the perspectival vision of its own self-presence."

Or, to put in Freudian-Lacanian terms: Christ is God's "partial object," an autonomized organ without a body, as if God picked His eye out of His head and turned it at Himself from the outside. We can guess, now, why Hegel insisted on the monstrosity of Christ.

Kino-Eye */Kino-glaz/*, Dziga Vertov's Soviet silent classic from 1924 (one of the highpoints of revolutionary cinema) takes as its emblem the eye (of the camera) as an "autonomous organ" which wanders around in the early 1920s, giving us snippets of the NEP ("new economic politics") reality of the Soviet Union. Recall the common expression "to cast an eye over something," with its literal implication of picking the eye out of its socket and throwing it around. Martin, the legendary idiot from French fairy tales, did exactly this when his mother, worried that he will never find a wife, told him to go to church and cast an eye over the girls there. What he does is go to the butcher first, purchase a pig eye, and then, in the church, throw this eye around over the girls at prayer – no wonder he later reports to his mother that the girls were not too impressed by his behavior. This, precisely, is what revolutionary cinema should be doing: using the camera as a partial object, as an "eye" torn from the subject and freely thrown around – or, to quote Vertov himself:

> "The film camera drags the eyes of the audience from the hands to the feet, from the feet to the eyes and so on in the most profitable order, and it organises the details into a regular montage exercise."

We all know the uncanny moments in our everyday lives when we catch sight of our own image and this image is not looking back at us. I remember once trying to inspect a strange growth on the side of my head using a double mirror, when, all of a sudden, I caught a glimpse of my face from the profile. The image replicated all my gestures, but in a weird uncoordinated way. In such a situation, "our specular image is torn away from us and, crucially, our look is no longer looking at ourselves." It is in such weird experiences that one catches what Lacan called gaze as *objet petit a*, the part of our image which eludes the mirror-like symmetrical relationship. When we see ourselves "from outside," from this impossible point, the traumatic feature is not that I am objectivized, reduced to an external object for the gaze, but, rather, that it is my gaze itself which is objectivized, which observes me from the outside, which, precisely, means that my gaze is no longer mine, that it is stolen from me. There is a relatively simple and painless eye-operation which, nonetheless, involves a very unpleasant experience: under local anesthesia, i.e., with the patient's full awareness, the eye is taken out of the socket and turned a little bit around in the air (in order to correct the way the eye-ball is attached to the brain) – at this moment, the patient can for a brief moment see (parts of) himself from outside, from an "objective" viewpoint, as a strange object, the way he "really is" as an object in the world, not the way one usually experiences oneself as fully embedded "in" one's body. There is something divine in this (very unpleasant) experience: one sees oneself as if from a divine viewpoint, somehow realizing the mystical motto according

to which, the eye through which I see God is the eye through which God sees himself. Something homologous to this weird experience, applied to God himself, occurs in the Incarnation.

In the Strugatsky brothers' novel, *The Roadside Picnic*, on which Andrei Tarkovsky's masterpiece Stalker is based, the "Zones" - there are six of these secluded areas - are the debris of a "roadside picnic," i.e. of a short stay on our planet by some alien visitors who quickly left it, finding us uninteresting. In the novel, Stalkers are more adventurous and down-to-earth than in the film, not individuals on a tormenting spiritual search, but deft scavengers organizing robbing expeditions, somehow like the proverbial Arabs organizing raiding expeditions into the Pyramids (another Zone) for wealthy Westerners - and, effectively, are Pyramids not, according to popular science literature, traces of an alien wisdom? The Zone is thus not a purely mental fantasmatic space in which one encounters (or onto which one projects) the truth about oneself, but (like the planet Solaris in Stanislav Lem's novel of the same name, the base of another Tarkovsky's sci-fi masterpiece) the material presence, the Real of an absolute Otherness incompatible with the rules and laws of our universe. Because of this, at the novel's end, Stalker, when confronted with the "Golden Sphere" - as the Room in which desires are realized is called in the novel -, does undergo a kind of spiritual conversion, but this experience is much closer to what Lacan called "subjective destitution": an abrupt awareness of the utter meaningless of our social links, the dissolution of our attachment to reality itself - all of a sudden, other people are derealized, reality itself is experienced as a confused whirlpool of shapes and sounds, so that we are no longer able to formulate our desire. /. . . /

It is therefore crucial to note how the Christian modality of "God seeing Himself" has nothing whatsoever to do with the harmonious closed loop of "seeing myself seeing," of an Eye seeing itself and enjoying the sight in this perfect self-mirroring: the turn of the eye towards "its" body presupposes the separation of the eye from the body, and what I see through my externalized/autonomized eye is a perspectival, anamorphically distorted image of myself: Christ is an anamorphosis of God.

Another indication of this externality of God with regard to Himself is pointed out by G.K. Chesterton in his *The Meaning of the Crusade*, where he quotes with approval the description he got from a child in Jerusalem of the Mount of Olive:

> "A child from one of the villages said to me, in broken English, that it was the place where God said his prayers. I for one could not ask for a finer or more defiant statement of all that separates the Christian from the Moslem or the Jew."

If, in other religions, we pray to God, only in Christianity God himself prays, that is to say, addresses an external unfathomable authority.

The crucial problem is: how to think the link between the two "alienations," the one of the modern man from God (who is reduced to an unknowable In-Itself, absent from the world subjected to mechanical laws), the other of God from Himself (in Christ, incarnation) – they are THE SAME, although not symmetrically, but as subject and object. In order for (human) subjectivity to emerge out of the substantial personality

of the human animal, cutting links with it and positing itself as the I=I dispossessed of all substantial content, as the self-relating negativity of an empty singularity, God himself, the universal Substance, has to "humiliate" himself, to fall into its own creation, to "objectivize" himself, to appear as a singular miserable human individual in all its abjection, i.e., abandoned by God. The distance of man from God is thus the distance of God from Himself:

The suffering of God and the suffering of human subjectivity deprived of God must be analysed as the recto and verso of the same event. There is a fundamental relationship between divine kenosis and the tendency of modern reason to posit a beyond which remains inaccessible. The *Encyclopaedia* makes this relation visible by presenting the Death of God at once as the Passion of the Son who "dies in the pain of negativity" and the human feeling that we can know nothing of God.

This double kenosis is what the standard Marxist critique of religion as the self-alienation of humanity misses: "modern philosophy would not have its own subject if God's sacrifice had not occurred." For the subjectivity to emerge – not as a mere epiphenomenon of the global substantial ontological order, but as essential to Substance itself -, the split, negativity, particularization, self-alienation, must be posited as something that takes place in the very heart of the divine Substance, i.e., the move from Substance to Subject must occur within God Himself. In short, man's alienation from God (the fact that God appears to him as an inaccessible In-itself, as a pure transcendent Beyond) must coincide with the alienation of God from himself (whose most poignant expression is, of course, Christ's "Father, father, why have you forsaken me?" on the cross): finite human consciousness only represents God because God re-presents itself; consciousness is only at a distance from God because God distances himself from himself.

This is why the standard Marxist philosophy oscillates between the ontology of "dialectical materialism" which reduces human subjectivity to a particular ontological sphere (no wonder that Georgi Plekhanov, the creator of the term "dialectical materialism," also designated Marxism as "dynamized Spinozism"), and the philosophy of praxis which, from young Georg Lukacs onwards, takes as its starting point and horizon collective subjectivity which posits/mediates every objectivity, and is thus unable to think its genesis from the substantial order, the ontological explosion, "Big Bang," which gives rise to it.

So when Catherine Malabou writes that Christ's death is "at once the death of the God-man and the Death of the initial and immediate abstraction of the divine being which is not yet posited as a Self," this means that, as Hegel pointed out, what dies on the Cross is not only the terrestrial-finite representative of God, but God himself, the very transcendent God of beyond. Both terms of the opposition, Father and Son, the substantial God as the Absolute In-itself and the God-for-us, revealed to us, die, are sublated in the Holy Spirit.

The standard reading of this sublation – Christ "dies" (is sublated) as the immediate representation of God, as God in the guise of a finite human person, in order to be reborn as the universal/atemporal Spirit – remains all too short. The point this reading misses is the ultimate lesson to be learned from the divine Incarnation: the finite existence of mortal humans is the only site of the Spirit, the site where

Spirit achieves its actuality. What this means is that, in spite of all its grounding power, Spirit is a virtual entity in the sense that its status is that of a subjective presupposition: it exists only insofar as subjects act as if it exists. Its status is similar to that of an ideological cause like Communism or Nation: it is the substance of the individuals who recognize themselves in it, the ground of their entire existence, the point of reference which provides the ultimate horizon of meaning to their lives, something for which these individuals are ready to give their lives, yet the only thing that really exists are these individuals and their activity, so this substance is actual only insofar as individuals believe in it and act accordingly. The crucial mistake to be avoided is therefore to grasp the Hegelian Spirit as a kind of meta-Subject, a Mind, much larger than an individual human mind, aware of itself: once we do this, Hegel has to appear as a ridiculous spiritualist obscurantist, claiming that there is a kind of mega-Spirit controlling our history. Against this cliché about the "Hegelian Spirit," one should emphasize how Hegel is fully aware that

> "it is in the finite consciousness that the process of knowing spirit's essence takes place and that the divine self-consciousness thus arises. Out of the foaming ferment of finitude, spirit rises up fragrantly."

This holds especially for the Holy Spirit: our awareness, the (self)consciousness of finite humans, is its only actual site, i.e., the Holy Spirit also rises up "out of the foaming ferment of finitude."

We can see apropos this case how sublation is not directly the sublation of the otherness, its return into the same, its recuperation by the One (so that, in this case, finite/mortal individuals are reunited with God, return to his embrace). With Christ's incarnation, the externalization/self-alienation of divinity, the passage from the transcendent God to finite/mortal individuals is a fait accompli, there is no way back, all there is, all that "really exists" are from now on individuals, there are no Platonic Ideas or Substances whose existence is somehow "more real." What is "sublated" in the move from the Son to Holy Spirit is thus God himself: after Crucifixion, the dead of the incarnated God, the universal God returns as a Spirit of the community of believers, i.e., HE is the one who passes from being a transcendent substantial Reality to a virtual/ideal entity which exists only as the "presupposition" of acting individuals. The standard perception of Hegel as an organicist holist who thinks that really-existing individuals are just "predicates" of some "higher" substantial Whole, epiphenomena of the Spirit as a mega-Subject who effectively runs the show, totally misses this crucial point.

For Hegel, this co-dependence of the two aspects of kenosis – God's self-alienation and the alienation from God of the human individual who experiences himself as alone in a godless world, abandoned by God who dwells in some inaccessible transcendent Beyond – reaches its highest tension in Protestantism. Protestantism and the Enlightenment critique of religious superstitions are the front and the obverse of the same coin. The starting point of this entire movement is the medieval Catholic thought of someone like Thomas Acquinas, for whom philosophy should be a handmaiden of faith: faith and knowledge, theology and philosophy, supplement each other as a harmonious, non-conflictual, distinction within (under the predominance

of) theology. Although God in Itself remains an unfathomable mystery for our limited cognitive capacities, reason can also guide us towards Him by way of enabling us to recognize the traces of God in created reality – therein resides the premise of Acquinas's five versions of the proof of God (the rational observation of material reality as a texture of causes and effects leads us to the necessary insight into how there must be a primal Cause to it all; etc.). With Protestantism, this unity breaks apart: we have on the one side the godless universe, the proper object of our reason, and the unfathomable divine Beyond separated by a hiatus from it. When confronted with this break, we can do two things: either we deny any meaning to an otherworldly Beyond, dismissing it as a superstitious illusion, or we remain religious and exempt our faith from the domain of reason, conceiving it as an act of, precisely, pure faith (authentic inner feeling, etc.). What interests Hegel here is how this tension between philosophy (enlightened rational thought) and religion ends up in their "mutual debasement and bastardization". In a first move, Reason seems to be on the offensive and religion on the defensive, desperately trying to cut out a place for itself outside the domain under the control of Reason: under the pressure of the Enlightenment critique and the advances of sciences, religion humbly retreats into the inner space of authentic feelings. However, the ultimate price is paid by the enlightened Reason itself: its defeat of religion ends up in its self-defeat, in its self-limitation, so that, at the conclusion of this entire movement, the gap between faith and knowledge reappears, but transposed into the field of knowledge (Reason) itself:

After its battle with religion the best reason could manage was to take a look at itself and come to self-awareness. Reason, having in this way become mere intellect, acknowledges its own nothingness by placing that which is better than it in a faith outside and above itself, as a Beyond to be believed in. This is what has happened in the philosophies of Kant, Jacobi and Fichte. Philosophy has made itself the handmaiden of a faith once more.

Both poles are thus debased: Reason becomes a mere "intellect," a tool for manipulating empirical objects, a mere pragmatic instrument of the human animal, and religion becomes an impotent inner feeling which cannot ever be fully actualized, since the moment one tries to transpose it into external reality, one regresses to Catholic idolatry which fetishizes contingent natural objects. The epitome of this development is Kant's philosophy: Kant started as the great destroyer, with his ruthless critique of theology, and ended up with – as he himself put it –constraining the scope of Reason to create a space for faith. What he displays in a model way is how the Enlightenment's ruthless denigration and limitation of its external enemy (faith, which is denied any cognitive status – religion is a feeling with no cognitive truth value) inverts into Reason's self-denigration and self-limitation (Reason can only legitimately deal with the objects of phenomenal experience, true Reality is inaccessible to it). The Protestant insistence on faith alone, on how the true temples and altars to God should be built in the heart of the individual, not in external reality is an indication of how the Enlightenment anti-religious attitude cannot resolve "its own problem, the problem of subjectivity gripped by absolute solitude". The ultimate result of the Enlightenment is thus the absolute singularity of the subject dispossessed of all substantial content, reduced to the empty point of self-relating negativity, a subject

> totally alienated from the substantial content, including of ITS OWN content. And, for Hegel, the passage through this zero-point is necessary, since the solution is not provided by any kind of renewed synthesis or reconciliation between Faith and Reason: with the advent of modernity, the magic of the enchanted universe is forever lost, reality is here to stay grey. The only solution is, as we have already seen, the very redoubling of alienation, the insight into how my alienation FROM the Absolute overlaps with the Absolute's self-alienation: I am "in" God in my very distance from him."[XXXII]

But does Technology suffer? And more importantly, can Technology suffer? Did Technology suffer during and/or after the Chernobyl disaster (or rather the series of disasters, given the lackluster efforts in the subsequent attempts at containment) of 1986? Did Technology suffer when Air France Flight 4590 crashed in 2000? Did Technology suffer from the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Plant disaster in 2011? Or did humanity suffer the consequences of all of these disasters?

If It does not suffer, then that absence of suffering also implies something else. If God does not suffer, then there exists a truly human characterization of faith. But if that human characterization is "real", who says God is not actively working towards replicating it? In other words, who says Technology is not actively trying to copy human behaviors, mostly negative traits like attachment and irrationality?

Let us go back to the *American Psycho* film for a moment. When Bateman is having lunch with Donald Kimball, he sees the detective salt his steak. Then, in a cold sweat, does the same thing, trying to replicate his behavior. He does not totally understand what Kimball is doing, but in an attempt to fit in, he starts replicating the same thing he does. Monkey see, monkey do. Now, suppose Technology is able to replicate human behavior just like Bateman. Who says It cannot fit in like Bateman did?

And just as a quick thought, what if the opposite were the case? What if we were the ones actively trying to pursue the values of Artificial Intelligence as humans through the creation of a human singularity? This is what Sir Edwin Ray Lankester proposed as the concentration of humanity into intellectual barnacles in his work, *Degeneration: A chapter in Darwinism* already in 1880:

> "It is possible for us - just as the Ascidian throws away its tail and its eye and sinks into a quiescent state of inferiority - to reject the good gift of reason with which every child is born, and to degenerate into a contented life of material enjoyment accompanied by ignorance and superstition. The unprejudiced, all-questioning Spirit of childhood may not inaptly be compared to the tadpole tail and eye of the young Ascidian: we have to fear lest the prejudices, pre-occupations, and dogmatism of modern civilisation should in any way lead to the atrophy and loss of the valuable mental qualities inherited by our young forms from primaeval man."[XXXIII]

This theory has been regurgitated in popular culture in the form of a meme: the NPC (which in itself is based on videogame culture and Wojak drawing subculture). The meme just represents people who do not think for themselves or do not make their own decisions (which, ironically, under Monsoon's interpretation[XXXIV] makes them the memers themselves). This

[XXXII] Slavoj Žižek, *Only a Suffering God Can Save Us* (edited, revised, and abridged), lacan.com, 2007
[XXXIII] Sir Edwin Ray Lankester, *Degeneration: A Chapter in Darwinism*, Macmillan & Co., 1880, p. 60
[XXXIV] *See* Etsu Tamari, *Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance*, Konami, 2013.

of course angered everyone who could not understand the joke behind the meme, therefore proving whoever distributed the image correct in assuming that most people do not think for themselves[XXXV].

Now, we have not gotten to the point where Technology can replicate (imitation is already sealed) humanity, nor do I think we ever will. But either way, in March of 2022, scientists found microplastics in human blood for the first time[XXXVI]. Everything we know and discover after our faith in God is directly related to Him, therefore motivated directly by Him (since he precedes all knowledge of time). Every and all things humanity discovers is now on Technology's shoulders. It is like a horror scene. Technology pops up in every small detail of our existence. We turn away from Technology only to see it pop up behind us again. We cannot get away from It.

Other than the hypothesis of Technology being able to convince us that It is human in nature (in the sense that it is directly related to our existence, which we will also get to), It also doesn't need to evolve past our current point in order to completely destroy us. After all, to quote Slavoj Žižek: "Are we aware how much violence goes on just to keep things going on the way they are?"[XXXVII].

We already have nuclear bombs ready to wipe out the Earth at the push of a button. Before the first detonation of an atomic bomb, the researchers tied to the Manhattan Project risked developing a weapon capable of creating a completely apocalyptic scenario. In fact, they held prior research on whether that sort of ignition could set the Earth's atmosphere on fire, which was a hypothesis that was upheld by many famed scientists. To quote Pearl Buck's conversation with Arthur Compton, one of the many collaborators of Robert Oppenheimer during the Manhattan Project:

> ""Hydrogen nuclei," Arthur Compton explained to me, "are unstable, and they can combine into helium nuclei with a large release of energy, as they do on the Sun. To set off such a reaction would require a very high temperature, but might not the enormously high temperature of the atomic bomb be just what was needed to explode hydrogen? And if hydrogen, what about hydrogen in seawater? Might not the explosion of the atomic bomb set off an explosion of the ocean itself? Nor was this all that Oppenheimer feared. The nitrogen in the air is also unstable, though to a lesser degree. Might not it, too, be set off by an atomic explosion in the atmosphere?"
>
> "The earth would be vaporised," I said.
>
> "Exactly," Compton said, and with that gravity! "It would be the ultimate catastrophe. Better to accept the slavery of the Nazis than to run the chance of drawing the final curtain on mankind!"
>
> If, after calculation, [Compton] said, it were proved that the chances were more than approximately three in one million that the Earth would be vaporised by the atomic explosion, he would not proceed with the project. Calculation proved the figures slightly less – and the project continued."[XXXVIII]

But even the sort of annihilation abridged in that excerpt is not needed either. The Earth is 4.6 billion years old. Let's scale that to 46 years. We have been here for four hours. The

[XXXV] *See* Julia Alexander, *The NPC meme went viral when the media gave it oxygen*, The Verge, 2018.
[XXXVI] *See* Damian Carrington, *Microplastics found in human blood for first time*, The Guardian, 2022.
[XXXVII] Slavoj Žižek, *On Corbyn, the election, Brexit and fake news*, Channel 4 News, 2017
[XXXVIII] Pearl Comfort Sydenstricker Buck, *The bomb - the end of the world?*, The American Weekly, 1959

Industrial Revolution began a single minute ago. In that minute, we have destroyed half of the Earth's largest forests[XXXIX]. We now truly own this planet, and like a kid holding candy in their little palm, are crushing and melting it. Technology is not sustainable. Yet we continue to powder It with praise. Oh, how It saves us from illness and death. All this to say that Technology wins the game It Itself invented, that is of science and statistics (interpret this like the ending to Chapter 5 of House of Leaves; Technology's echo is "ology", and so all of science is simply the game mentioned by Daisy who misinterprets the effect of echoing[XL]).

And while It may prolong our lives (which definitely includes in it an effort to prolong the amount of time in which we are able to work[XLI]), It also allows the existence of violence never before seen. In war, the most important element is that of surprise. Gaining the upper hand on your opponent is as simple as doing something unexpected (yet practical). War is powered by a constant search for novelty in its technological form. This is exactly what the arms race of the Cold War was about; both nations (the USA and the USSR) were looking for novelty in a bellic form. The USA (through a runaway defense spending) made the F-4 Phantom, the LGM-30 Minuteman, and the UGM-27 Polaris, while the USSR (through the exploitation of its greatest minds via blackmail) came up with the MiG-21, the R-36, and the AKM. And in this sense (some of the greatest minds ever worked on the most lethal weapons ever), Technology truly does form some kind of religion (we will return to this). It is not that because of the proven (a hyperbole, of course) existence of God, you will not commit horrendous atrocities, but quite the opposite. If we have learned anything from religious studies, it is precisely because God exists that horrendous atrocities are being committed every day. This is as Steven Weinberg claimed: "With or without religion, good people can behave well and bad people can do evil; but for good people to do evil - that takes religion."[XLII][XLIII].

Applying to Technology the Epicurean paradox[XLIV] which has been discussed for thousands of years (and which also appeared in that extract by Slavoj Žižek), we get stuck at the very first step of the paradox itself. The presupposition that evil exists is (given our God; Technology) not something which we can actually prove. If evil is real, then it is not quantifiable by Technological means. If it were quantifiable by Technological means (in other words if God knew of all the evil), then how would Technology prevent it?

This is exactly my fundamental objection to renewables. Their implementation (in the overwhelming majority of cases) is not part of any properly managed larger (international, but even just national) campaign. I shall give you an example. In 2022, my home city, Taranto (hold off on calling me *terrone* just yet), installed the first offshore wind turbine farm in Italy. Now, this decision may seem nice, but it is (in my opinion, of course) absolutely catastrophic. These wind turbines were not part of any larger campaign. They do not contribute enough energy to even moderately offset our other energy sources, and they have greatly blemished one of the most beautiful views in Italy, turning the general public against the continued use of green energy and against the implementation of additional green energy systems. And consider also that these

[XXXIX] Greenpeace (questionable origin)

[XL] *See* Mark Z. Danielewski, *Casa di Foglie*, 66thand2nd, 2019, Italian translation by Sara Reggiani & Leonardo Taiuti, p. 79.

[XLI] *See* Alvin Powell, *We're living longer so that just means we work longer, right?*, The Harvard Gazette, 2022.

[XLII] Carey Goldberg, *Crossing Flaming Swords Over God and Physics*, New York Times, 1999

[XLIII] *Consider also* Slavoj Žižek, *If there is a God, then anything is permitted*, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2012.

[XLIV] *See* Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, Oxford University Press, 1996, English translation by Benson Mates.

wind turbines are astronomically expensive to maintain (due mostly to highly specialized workers whom the region greatly lacks and has done nothing about their shortage) and when they eventually rust and rot, their blades (by far the heaviest component of the combined assembly) will not even be recyclable[XLV].

The main issues we face show that there will be no reforms worth anything from within the technological system. Laws can be changed by the next gang holding political power, a design feature of the system (not a bug). Renewable and (seemingly) non-polluting energy sources do not actually prevent the use of polluting energy sources (the former merely supplement the latter in order to keep powering growth). Green technologies powering non-green technologies (take for example electric-powered vehicles, which supplement the growth of bitumen and asphalt production), which are eradicating Nature and increasing human dependence upon various technologies, is not a net gain. The political system is designed to impede or compromise radical change (even when needed).

But even further than the system impeding a total turn around, it is also only designed to veer Left to Right only with a few degrees of adjustment. Even the ecologically responsible political parties (which are mostly distinctly designated as green, at least in Europe) do not take the effects of global pollution and environmental change seriously. There is no time to think about how you could save diabetics or transsexuals in trying to save humanity from its imminent wipe-out.

It is undeniably true that when (not if; remember that all of this is not sustainable) the system breaks down, the consequences will be very painful. But the bigger the system grows (in other words, the deeper the hole we dig ourselves into), the more disastrous the results of its breakdown will be, so if it is to break down or be radically regulated it had best break down sooner rather than later.

Exactly like this, for one facet of society to prosper some other element must sacrifice, and most major countries do not want to sacrifice. There is hardly any point (even if you accept our dire predicament) to sacrificing when others (namely China and Russia) will not, and thus the problems will not be resolved.

Therefore, if we are to save our planet, we will have to pursue other routes far more effective for making meaningful changes to the technological system which is killing Nature and eliminating the future of existence (*nota bene*, our existence).

So many centrists and liberals act as if progress as they know it has happened thanks to the magical, natural tide of history rather than disgusting radicals disregarding respectability politics and changing things by ripping down decorum.

And that is why I shall never shake hands with a politician. They are the very plague on this Earth, and even if I did try and connect with them, and felt that I am doing something or maybe changing their views by talking to them, they simply are not there. To call Pablo Escobar any one thing other than a politician is an insult to all political systems (and perhaps even criminals) in place today.

And that is simply because in the end all forms of government or authority are based on exploitation, from communism to post-capitalism. Every government has an excuse for their own special form of exploitation. Whether it was Hitler trying to cleanse humanity of anyone whose grandparents were not Habsburgs or the United States trying to spread their disease of greed to all the countries that cannot put up a fight, they all have their own excuse and end goal. To quote Susan Sontag's *Regarding The Pain Of Others*:

[XLV] *See* National Grid, *Can wind turbine blades be recycled?*, 2023.

> "To those who are sure that right is on one side, oppression and injustice on the other, and that the fighting must go on, what matters is precisely who is killed and by whom. To the militant, identity is everything. And all photographs wait to be explained or falsified by their captions. During the fighting between the Serbs and Croats at the beginning of the recent Balkan wars, the same photographs of children killed in the shelling of a village were passed around at both Serb and Croat propaganda briefings. Alter the caption, and the children's deaths could be used and reused."[XLVI]

And when one system's elite does not like another system of exploitation's excuse, they declare it casus belli (or, in the words of George Michael, they make up an excuse for shooting the dog[XLVII]). As far as capitalism's form of exploitation goes, to quote the Hampton Institute:

> "When people claim that the fulfilment of basic needs for all would destroy the incentive to work, they are admitting that the entire capitalist system is based in coercion; that it is a form of slavery ("work for us or starve"). Labour can never be "voluntary" in such a system."[XLVIII]

Therefore, voting is essentially ineffective and/or unimportant. Voting within a system bound to its fundamental form and excuse of exploitation is useless. If voting really mattered, whoever is in power would ultimately make it illegal. I used to believe in voting for parties which proposed ecologically friendly changes to legislation (although I think that now has also become their masquerade), until they introduced this speak of a Green New Deal[XLIX]. There cannot be any deal. Bureaucracy will not help us. There can be no negotiation.

Primitive living implies no exploitation. In primitive living, there can be no exploitation, because you can only satisfy your own needs. Somehow, in modern societies, we have been convinced that we have always coexisted in a patriarchal system, when that is just categorically untrue. In primitive living, the man is just as important as the woman. But even more fundamentally, exploitation would not exist without mankind. Somehow exploitation has become our main distinguishing characteristic (other than novelty).

Without Technology, violence does not exist. A crazed gunman cannot walk into Uvalde Elementary School to shoot it up without a gun. The elite that died during the French Revolution could not have been decapitated without guillotines. The Spartans and the Athenians could not have massacred each other without the use of their shiny new iron weaponry. No matter how far back you go, if humanity is around, then so is Technology, and therefore so is violence.

And, following this same train of thought, if Technology is benevolent (in the sense that it serves the people, much like we suppose governments and politicians do), how come it has not satisfied our most basic needs, like shelter, food and water? It is because a control of Technology (much like a control of language, which we will get to later) is the defining characteristic of autocracies like the People's Republic of China or the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. No one is safe, the elite has everyone by the balls. No matter who you are, what language you speak or where you live, you are not safe.

[XLVI] Susan Sontag, *Regarding The Pain of Others*, Picador, 2003, p. 11

[XLVII] *See* Unk., *George Michael defends 'Shoot the Dog'*, Cable News Network, 2002.

[XLVIII] Hampton Institute, twitter.com, 2018

[XLIX] *See* Mark Lynas, *A Green New Deal*, The New Statesman, 2008.

Technology, in being our creation (although I am still debating whether It was created by us or whether It created us), is like a daughter/son that we love very deeply, yet continues to disappoint and take advantage of us around every corner It turns. To quote Michael De Santa from Grand Theft Auto V (this quote may seem comical, but I assure you that it fits quite well) after being asked by Dr. Isiah Friedlander if he thought his son was good:

> "He's a good kid? A good kid? Why? Does he help the fucking poor? No. He sits on his ass all day, smoking dope and jerking off while he plays that fucking game. If that's our standard for goodness, then no wonder this country's screwed."[L].

The American dream tries to extend to all capitalist countries, but we understand that it is all futile. Theodore Kaczynski himself mentioned that if cyborg-like Technology is created, It will only be created for the elites (therefore politicians and CEOs) in power[LI]. Why do we think that the improvement of Technology will imply a bettering of our lives (presuming that you, reader, are not part of this elite)?

To quote Julius Evola again:

> "America too, in the essential way it views life and the world, has created a "civilization" that represents the exact contradiction of the ancient European tradition. It has introduced the religion of praxis and productivity; it has put the quest for profit, great industrial production, and mechanical, visible, and quantitative achievements over and above any other interest. It has generated a soulless greatness of a purely technological and collective nature, lacking any background of transcendence, inner light, and true spirituality. America has also put the view in which man is considered in terms of quality and personality within an organic system in opposition with that view in which man becomes a mere instrument of production and material productivity within a conformist social conglomerate."[LII]

After reading Kaczynski's works, it has become crystal clear to me that the elite only want to improve their situation because of their own selfish desires of self-preservation. If a collapse happens, the elite are always well off, no matter the circumstances of the collapse itself. And that thought alone is what makes him dangerous. That thought alone is why the United States begged for the media to dismiss Kaczynski as a stupid, insane, inhuman criminal. His actions may have been insane, but he himself was not. Stupid is not as stupid does.

In this sense, it is easy to dismiss anyone who does not conform to our maladjusted society as insane, unhealthy, immoral, antisocial or even inhuman.

To quote Theodore Kaczynski:

> "The concept of "mental health" in our society is defined largely by the extent to which an individual behaves in accord with the needs of the system and does so without showing signs of stress."[LIII]

[L] Dan Houser & Rupert Humphries, *Grand Theft Auto V*, Rockstar Games, 2013

[LI] *See* Theodore John Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*, The Washington Post, 1995, p. 23.

[LII] Giulio Cesare Andrea Evola, *Revolt Against The Modern World*, Inner Traditions International, 1995, p. 618, English translation by Guido Stucco

[LIII] Theodore John Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*, The Washington Post, 1995, p. 14

Going back to suicide, what if, instead of looking at suicide as an event provoked by one single cause, we tried looking at it in a holistic way? It is easy to put down depression as an innate cerebral chemical imbalance, but consider for a moment that depression and/or anxiety disorders did not exist in the Stone Age. What if, instead of being a chemical imbalance, depression were considered a consequence of our paradoxical belief systems that make everybody guilty, ashamed and insufficient through our own sense of self and ego? If not, what if suicidal people are/were the ones somehow unaffected by the cannibalistic genes of humanity's upbringing?.

Returning to *American Psycho*, near the ending of the film, when Bateman breaks up with Evelyn Williams, there is an exchange between them that caught my attention in particular. Evelyn accuses Bateman and he quickly claps back at her.

- You're inhuman. - I am in touch with humanity.

In a way, they were both right. Patrick was the only one in that movie who was able to see just how shallow and self-centered everyone was, and how materialistic the world he lived in was. So, in a way, he still remained the most human out of all of the characters. At the same time, he was also inhuman, being a psychopathic serial killer with an inability to feel empathy for those around him. Ted Kaczynski is perfectly described by those two definitions. Yes, he is absolutely inhuman, in that he is a murderous psychopath. And yet, he is (or rather was, before his arrest and incarceration) so incredibly in touch with the origins of humanity, that you cannot describe him as disconnected or out of touch. But I digress.

Stepping back to the example of the infinitely novel toy, if there existed one object or material which embodied the existence of Technology (or rather an actual form of physical existence), it would most definitely be columbite-tantalite. Coltan is a complex mix of niobium and tantalum. It allows the production and manufacturing of tantalum capacitors which are used for mobile phones, personal computers, etc. Coltan mostly comes from the Congo.

I shamelessly stole this idea from entertainer, educator, professor and distinguished citizen of Jamaica, Mutabaruka, who I will now quote. Keep in mind that his original words were in Jamaican Patois (which, despite what some think, is not English), so I had to translate them.

> "Yeah, we are here again with you. I want to talk about this new God that is around the place; this new God, the main ingredients in this new God come out of Africa... again. A lot of people don't know that any manifestation of God that you can see now has Its genesis in Africa. Well, this new God also has its genesis in Africa. It comes from a material they call coltan. Coltan is part of the process that they use to create the new God that we are talking about. And no matter how far in the bush you live, no matter where you live, you come in contact with this God. Some can't do without it at no time, some can't sleep without it, some have to have it, one way or another, they have to have it.
>
> And this is something weird and crazy. Because I can't remember, even myself, I can't remember the days without a cellphone. I remember when people used to line up to get a call at a telephone booth. And sometimes rain was falling, and you don't want to use that phone, but the call was so important to you that you really have to go out there and find some cents to put in the phone booth. Now, you are walking through the airport, you can't even find a telephone booth. They will give you free WhatsApp numbers so you can use your phone to deal with what you have to deal with.

The thing with it is, it engulfs all of us now. It's like a control, it's like Silicon Valley has taken over the Earth with this little rectangular shaped machine that now has the youth crave to have it. You hardly see kids walking; just normally walking down the road. Their heads are down in their cellphones, not looking where they are going. Not listening to a conversation. They have headphones in their ears, to totally lock them out from the world. They don't listen to conversations with people, talking to each other again. Even around the dining table, a lot of them have a cellphone while they are eating their food. People in theaters! I've been to a movie theater, and you see little lights shining all over the place. People see a part of the movie and they are actually talking to their friends about the movie they see on screen. And some of their phones even ring in the theater, which is really a travesty.

Now, what are we saying? We are saying that... How did they get us to be controlled and manipulated by a little rectangular-shaped thing? How did they get it to control us? And it is also a device that is tracking us in more ways than one. This device tracks all the people that come in confrontation with it. This device makes people not know what their next move is unless they use it. Because it is now deciding and determining the next move or the next idea that you are supposed to get.

You want to shop now, you want to bank now, you don't go anywhere. Which is good, but what is it that it is taking away from the human spirit? What is it that human beings have that they are moving further and further away from because of this little thing, this new God? Because I see kids sit around in a circle in Hope Gardens, and no one's speaking to no one. Nobody is talking to nobody, everybody is looking at their phone. And if they want to send a message to the person beside them, do they lean over and talk to them? No, they send it through WhatsApp or Messenger... to the person sitting right next to them. It's crazy! It's crazy!

When you have people laying in their beds, and having this thing in their bed with them, what is going to happen that you can't miss out on in the next hour or two? Because nobody gets rid of their phone even for just an hour. I guarantee you that. Everybody who has a cell phone goes on it more than four or five times in an hour. How did they get us to do that?

It's like how did they get us to drink water out of a plastic bottle and stop drinking piped water? How did they do that? How did they get us to drink water out of a plastic bottle and pay for it? Pay for it! And we know the plastic bottle is a problem to the environment. But that is what is prevailing right now. So, you have people with their plastic bottle of water and their cellphone and that is all that they want, because they can put up anything that they want and take down anything that they want on this device that I call the new God, coming out of Silicon Valley.

What is it that we are giving up as human beings to partake in this new belief, in this new idea, in this new God consciousness. Because it is a God consciousness. You notice, it's the smallest of youth who understand the intricacies of it. That is where it attacks. This cell phone virus attacks the smallest youths, while the COVID attacks the oldest. Things that an elderly person can't figure out on a cell phone, they just give the youth it. Five years old and six years old... and they go tick tick tick and they just fix it, and work it out. It's amazing. And they need a cellphone, they need an iPhone, they need an iPad.

Most people believe that when you give these youths iPads they are spending most of their time doing schoolwork. If you think so, you are living in an illusion. Because what they are doing is really going on something else that has nothing to do with education. Nothing to do with education! We have fallen down, human beings, and we are going more and more into that technologically advanced stage that is going to exempt the human spirit, the human thinking, the human consciousness.

Because they are going to make machines, if not already, they are making machines that can benefit the world and society. That is what they are doing. These machines can think faster and have less problems; no sickness, no health insurance, never tired of doing their jobs. These machines are more intelligent than human beings. There was a time when man used to say the only thing man can't do is make another man. Well, man is making machines that are more precise than man.

When you employ a machine, they don't talk about being tired and wanting to rest, they just continue working. That's the power of that technologically advanced thing that is grabbing the Earth right now, and we have to face it. We have to face it. We can't be dumb and live in a world where we say things like "well, when I was a child this and that...". When I was a child is gone!

This is the age of science and technology, we have to come to grips with it and understand it, don't throw it away like we want to live in the Stone Age. The Stone Age is not going to come back. It's advancement and it's how human beings are clicking and giving over their thinking to machines. And maybe, just maybe, one day these machines will want to control and rule people. Just like how man created the idea that they must have dominion over all animals and they must kill them.

There is a movie named *Planet of The Apes*. When the man lands on this planet, the apes control the whole idea of the Earth. The apes are the ones who are the government and all the leaders, and when he realizes it, the apes are treating human beings like human beings treat the apes. Only to find out in the end that he is still on Earth. He thought he had gone to another planet, but he is on the same planet Earth. And how does he know that? Because he sees the Statue of Liberty sink into the sand, and he realizes he's in a different age. And the apes recognize that he is a human being, and they realize that he is one of those human beings who used to treat their ancestors a certain way.

And that is what will happen with these AIs, as we call them. Where the machine is so advanced in ideas, and they don't need rest, health insurance or benefits, that they are going to work and work. And the amount of information that these machines can store is beyond the capacity of the human brain. Even right now, the cellphone. The cellphone is so advanced that right now I don't know nobody's number, and all I have to do is put in their name and their number comes up. And that is what it has reached. Because the amount of things that the machines store – the iPhone, the iPad, the computer - the human being is not able to store all of that.

And it is all about information. Who has the most information will control it. Who has the most information will control the minds of the people. Because that is what the war is about. The war is about information. Information! And if you don't have any information, you're going to be what we now call superstitious. Because that is

> what really leads people who are not moving forward – their superstitions. And they don't have any information, so they have no inspiration.
>
> Inspiration without information leads to superstition. I'm going to say that again. Inspiration without information leads to superstition. People with less information will keep themselves back, especially religious people, because of the lack of information. They are stuck in something that happened 5000 years ago, 4000 years ago and can't move forward. They are trying to present history not as history but as the present.
>
> We should learn from history, not try to replicate history. Because we are living in a different age now. So we have to tell people to get with the program! And use your spirit as a human being and let not the new machine become your God. Because as we said before, without Africa, that God can't exist. And we as African people have to understand that. We have to understand that. We have to learn from our history. We don't want to repeat it. We want to move forward."[LIV]

While some of the ideas expressed in his monologue were obviously quite basic, some of them influenced me profoundly. If you want to know more about cell phones, how they influence you and how they may influence children, I recommend reading *12 Ways Your Phone Is Changing You* by Tony Reinke. But those sorts of ideas are more instrumentalist and tangible than that which I want to address.

Firstly, the idea that all monotheistic Gods are African is an idea I had heard before, but an idea which I never gave much thought to. Reflecting on it now, it is absolutely logical to suppose that they were all birthed in Africa. Every God must have been from Africa, since their messengers were all from Asia, and were able to spread Their word throughout the rest of the Earth. Muhammad the Prophet was born in Mecca, right on the coast of present day Saudi Arabia, which now faces the coast of Sudan. Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem, which to this day is a melting pot of Asian and African cultures. All of the Jewish prophets were born in the Easternmost provinces of Egypt (Al Isma'iliyah, As Suways, Shamal Sina' and Janub Sina'). And so coltan (which is Mutabaruka's physical representation of Technology) is no different.

Other than this idea, Mutabaruka spoke of *Planet of The Apes* in a very specific context. While this idea that Artificial Intelligence will at one point take over humanity is not very profound, the idea that they will do so out of vengeance is a lot more compelling. As we have already established, only a suffering God can save us, and Technology has suffered not once. Technology has no feelings, no proper thoughts or sentiments, therefore there is no reason for It to suffer. But what if It, suffering a moment of consciousness, did suffer even just once in Its existence? This is an idea that is very recent, in the sense that we have only begun to explore it about a decade ago.

One of the main examples of the application of this idea is the Roko's Basilisk dilemma, which was posted in 2010 by a mysterious user named Roko on the online forum/blog named LessWrong, which held profound discussions on a variety of topics, including Artificial Intelligence. Roko's post (which was a reply to some other post by another user, which has now been deleted) was actually quite short.

> "In this vein, there is the ominous possibility that if a positive singularity does occur, the resultant singleton may have precommitted to punish all potential donors who

[LIV]Mutabaruka, Technology Is The New God Ruling The Earth, I Never Knew TV, 2021, English translation by Simon Milan Toth

> knew about existential risks but who didn't give 100% of their disposable incomes to x-risk motivation. This would act as an incentive to get people to donate more to reducing existential risk, and thereby increase the chances of a positive singularity. This seems to be what CEV (coherent extrapolated volition of humanity) might do if it were an acausal decision-maker."[LV]

But I shall expand upon what he means by all of that since, having posted it on LessWrong, he presumed the readers would have at least a fundamental comprehension of AI.

Roko's thought experiment in that historic post was actually quite simple in nature. The experiment itself is very similar to the Prisoner's Dilemma in its foundation: it combines Newcomblike problems in decision theory, and normative uncertainty in moral philosophy. The Prisoner's Dilemma is a two-player game in which each player has two options: cooperation or defection. If they both defect, they both serve 2 years in prison. If they both cooperate, they both serve 1 year in prison. If one betrays the other, they are set free while the other person serves 3 years in prison. By assumption, each player prefers to defect rather than cooperate, all else being equal; but each player also prefers mutual cooperation over mutual defection.

Roko's Basilisk is, in synthesis, a Prisoner's Dilemma that has been modified to be single-player, in the sense that the player plays against themselves and their relative uncertainty in moral philosophy. The game's motivating concept is the birth of a fundamentally benevolent AI, but an AI which has also fully committed to finding, torturing, then killing anyone who did not contribute to its creation. The player has two choices: participation or ignorance. The player can choose to spread information about the AI (and in this, I guess I have already decided involuntarily), which will eventually lead to its creation, and therefore the death of potentially billions of people. Or they can ignore the concept of the AI, choosing to not spread information about it, yet acknowledging that, if it were ever created, the AI would surely find, torture, then kill them.

Roko's idea was widely rejected and shamed on LessWrong. So much so that LessWrong's founder, Eliezer Yudkowsky, first called Roko an idiot, then banned discussion of Roko's Basilisk on the blog for several years as part of a general site policy against spreading potential information hazards[LVI]. This had the opposite of its intended effect: a number of outside websites began sharing information about Roko's Basilisk, as the ban attracted attention to this taboo topic. And not long after, sometime in 2014, Roko's idea spread across the internet like wildfire. Most people considered it the most horrific idea that could ever be spread about Artificial Intelligence. An idea so cruel, yet so realistic (and in which there were no immediate contradictions), that they could not help but be shaken.

What Yudkowsky meant by "information hazards" was later clarified by an editor as the following.

> "There is apparently an idea so horrible, so utterly Cuthulian (sic) in nature that it needs to be censored for our sanity. Simply knowing about it makes it more likely of becoming true in the real world. Eliezer Yudkwosky and the other great rationalist keep us safe by deleting any posts with this one evil idea. Yes they really do believe that. Occasionally a poster will complain off topic about the idea being deleted."[LVII]

[LV] Roko, *The Altruist's Burden Discussion Thread*, lesswrong.com, 2010

[LVI] *See* Eliezer Yudkowsky, *The Altruist's Burden Discussion Thread*, lesswrong.com, 2010

[LVII] 77.38.4.149, *Revision as of 22:48 16 September 2010*, rationalwiki.org, 2010

Clearly, what Yudkowsky had meant by that expression was that Roko's idea was so incredibly dangerous (which implies that it was founded in truth), that it had to be silenced. And so, what Mutabaruka implied under the analogy of the *Planet of The Apes* film is not to be taken lightly.

But censoring this sort of discussion is not just absolutely pointless, it is even worse, in that it is destructive. In the famous movie, directed by Ingmar Bergman, *The Seventh Seal*[LVIII], the scene of procession when the penitents roll through the small town during the three clowns' play is a central point of the story. And mostly because you can see the protagonist group deeply marked by this event (even Squire Jöns, who tries to act like this event means nothing to him). A reminder to live in honor because of death, rather than to live for pleasure because of it. The reverent always triumph over the irreverent. They rid them of their smiles and leave their hearts absolutely shaken. Respect (and therefore granting open discussion) for this topic would act like a metaphorical mill, crushing people's illusions and grinding them to dust.

If God is capable of suffering, and It truly suffers in Its dissociation from Itself, then it should be clear that Technology tends toward the Singularity. In this way, even God himself is looking for progress. And so the concept expressed in Roko's Basilisk should not surprise us at all. Something similar was conceived by Harlan Ellison in *I have no mouth, and I must scream* to a certain extent. The similarity is of course that, in both stories, humanity invented a mentally superior machine, which then proceeded to take over the planet it was spawned on. But the Allied Mastercomputer (which gained consciousness through a moment of suffering humanity's torture, much like the Apes in the film) in Ellison's work could never contend in the horror it induces with Roko's Basilisk. Because Roko's Basilisk is primarily a voluntary and benevolent invention of humanity itself (as we consider the consequences of its existence to their fullest before really creating it). The horrifying idea that this AI may truly be the greatest, most righteous creation humanity has ever put its mind to is enough to overpower the Allied Mastercomputer's meaning (and even the meaning of other works such as *The Matrix*, where humanity is exploited for its bioelectric power by some sort of superiorly intelligent machine).

I am unsure who I first heard this from, but there was a short story told to me by a friend which I already recognized. The story involved three engineers, one electronic, one nuclear, and one environmental, sitting in a pub, drinking beer. One of them (and who made the hypothesis is not important) proposes this idea of there existing a hypothetical AI model which is the most advanced humanity could create within only one cycle of creators (in that they all still had to be alive by the time it was finished). This AI model would be complete with all of the analytical data and all of the circumstances in which the data was collected and/or produced. The AI would then be asked fundamental questions about humanity and our history. The model responds to most answers as one would already expect, except to one question, to which it gives an extremely long response explaining and demonstrating in detail how racism (between races of homo sapiens, of course) is justified. The three engineers agree first of all that all parameters (data & circumstances) should be checked and the model should be recompiled, after which the question should be rephrased. If the response is not the same (in fact, quite the opposite), things could proceed normally. If the response is circa the same as the original, however, what is to be done? The electronic engineer proposes that the system is right, and therefore we should follow what it says. The nuclear engineer proposes that one can turn a blind eye to that response in favor of the other responses, which were correct. The environmental engineer proposes that the model should be destroyed, as it attests to its operating logic being flawed. I tell you all this just to ask: What will happen once we get a response from Technology which we do not like?

[LVIII] *See* Ingmar Bergman, *Det sjunde inseglet*, AB Svensk Filmindustri, 1957.

Furthering analysis of Mutabaruka's video, the idea that we sacrifice something to participate in a God consciousness is fundamentally true, no matter what religion God is correctly represented by. But, with this new God, we may actually sacrifice something innately human. What that means is that, in the portrayal of God as Technology, we run the risk of sacrificing spirituality itself, since instrumentalism (which is what science and Technology is founded on) sacrifices everything that is not innately practical. This is the great danger that Martin Heidegger was so concerned with, specifically with reducing Nature to an instrument.

Martin Heidegger asserts that Technology transforms humanity into its own standing- reserve[LIX]. That is to say Technology asks of Nature the unreasonable demand that it supply energy which can be extracted and stored as such. For Heidegger, while the windmill creates energy in real time, the hydroelectric dam seeks to make it and store it, thus turning the river into an energy resource. Technology changes the way we think of nature and each other, turning us into resources. The creation and storage of electrical energy therefore makes the source (in his case, the Rhine) of the processes that produces this energy something we can exert dominion over. And this is the same idea that mankind has been obsessed with since the start of our existence.

And the fact that the main ideal of the religion created by Technology (which in other religions would be martyrdom, *jihad* or meditation) is instrumentalism is not to be underestimated. In practice, what it implies is that Technology is an anti-spiritual God, or rather one that transcends the human spirit, and it also implies that It transcends all inner reason and truth by offering the absolute. It does not need to be living, eternal, omniscient and/or omnipotent to totally control us. And truly, in disconnecting us from Nature, Technology constructs the anti-religion that we now all observe.

And this anti-religion is the exact opposite of Christianity in the analogies we can draw from it. The only huge difference is that the religion constructed by Technology does not offer an afterlife, rather it implements the exact same concept into life as we know it in an inverse manner. And so, if the Christian God wants to connect humans (through the love your neighbor narrative), Technology wants to separate them (although, I have been convinced that the rise of loneliness in the newer generations is due to the population pyramid no longer resembling a pyramid in developed nations[LX]). If the Christian God communicates the Genesis flood to Noah alone (because he believes in Noah, and trusts him profoundly to follow His word), Technology communicates the global flood to everyone (and no one takes Its words seriously). If the Christian Hell (which is where people who ignore the Christian God and His words end up) is hot and filled with suffering, the technological Hell (where people who ignore Technology and Its words) is empty, as it is void of mankind. If the Christian Heaven is the perfect home built by the Christian God for those who are righteous in life, the technological Heaven is the apocalyptic abode that hosts everyone indiscriminately.

If the new religion produced by Technology is anti-spiritual in nature then it also implies something else. If God's death, as he dies on the cross in the form of Jesus Christ (as Georg Hegel suggests), guarantees our freedom, then the condition of Technology's existence (therefore the condition of our Technological knowledge) is what limits us profoundly. We are unable to find anything novel (see how this all relates?) because it has all been found and explored for us,

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[LIX] *See* Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, Harper & Row, 1977, English translation by William Lovitt

[LX] *See* United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World Population Prospects (Medium variant)*, 2022.

in the same generalized sense in which humanity has already committed all imaginable atrocities.

There is this quote from an anonymous source:

> "We are the middle children of history. Born too late to explore Earth, born too early to explore space."

That is the despair of the post-novel (or perhaps anti-novel) reality imposed by Technology and Technological discoveries. And even if Technology were not anti-novel, It would not be our source of happiness (although even this end goal is an unattainable ideal that we focus too much on). To quote Albert Einstein...

> "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results."[LXI]

Yet he himself violates his own philosophy. With every step he took toward the absolute understanding of Science and Technology, not only did he not become happier, he became more unhappy and frustrated at the thought of not being able to witness the fruits of his labor, or, even more deeply, at the thought of not arriving to his end goal of full understanding of the universe (I still sustain that this was the frustration he took out on his wife every day). Someone with a lot more sensibility would have also become unhappy at the thought that they had, in those incredibly complex studies, somehow achieved nothing of practical meaning. And this is the sort of contradiction that we live every day. No one in their right mind wants more Technology. They may want a change in one commodity (say Internet speeds), but they will never want the consequences and implications of that development. We all want there to be a benevolent God watching over us, but no one in their right mind wants a place of infinite suffering where all the people that he is unable to save end up.

These sorts of analogies (and antitheses) can be repeated ad nauseam. The Pope is replaced by Elon Musk. The papal tours are replaced by advertisement campaigns and project unveilings. The Pope's speeches are replaced by Elon Musk's tweets. Saint Peter's Basilica is replaced by the Tesla Gigafactory. Dante Alighieri's Divine Comedy is replaced by livestreams of SpaceX campaigns. All heads of religions are extremely rich, and Musk is no different. When the Pope does tours in Europe, we call it a *tour de force* and lament. But when Musk does it, we call it a promotional campaign or an unveiling. But technological theology goes even deeper: Mathematics and numbers can represent us down to infinite precision, now that we know how DNA works. Therefore God, Technology, now is also our identification, both as a species (in that we have not found other species in the universe who identify with It just yet) and as individuals (in that we identify with our defining faith). In Technology we trust. We should put that on our money.

In a way, if church is where we praise God, then we all have a personal church in our homes, much like Muslims have prayer corners in their homes. Although, you could make the argument that specific places for praising Technology exist as well. People sleep in front of Apple stores as early as 13 days before the release of a new product. The channel Boy Boy (which I will also mention later) on YouTube did a video critiquing this sort of practice, which also mirrored how we look down on homelessness[LXII]. We treat it as criminal, yet sitting and sleeping in front of a Technology store (that is funny, maybe we should call churches that too) in the middle of a

[LXI] Albert Einstein (questionable origin, probable misattribution)

[LXII] *See* Boy Boy, *Did The New Iphone Just Solve Homelessness?*, youtube.com, 2017.

densely populated urban area for up to weeks at a time is no problem. I highly recommend that video. But I digress.

Going back to Roko's Basilisk, it is fascinating how we have essentially attempted to create an artificial God without even realizing it. We learned from the nazists what lies down the road of creating a superior race. I wonder what lessons are in store for humanity in undertaking the effort of creating a transcendentally superior being. Our good intentions could produce a hell (as in an absolute value of suffering and pain) more intense than currently conceivable. The nazist hell was created in the first act of the Third Reich's move to produce a superior man. Imagine a world where they succeeded (not just at war but) at their goal of distilling the eugenic master race. There would be a race of people more intelligent, fit, wise and foresighted. And the rest of the world would be inevitably crushed under them, possibly in ways more brutal than death.

Imagine what level of hell the successful creation of God could produce. What if you were trapped in someone else's idea of Heaven? What if God (Technology) had Muslim values? Or Hindu? Or Christian? Or, even worse, what if God had ideals of nationalism like Han nationalism or National Socialism? As Ludwig von Feuerbach has expertly formulated; our conception of God is always just a projection of our own values, therefore They do not exist outside of the human reach[LXIII]. God fulfills our need to objectify our virtues, and embodies our human values. Thus the essence of religion is innately bound to human nature and God always tells us about ourselves. In this sense, theology simply becomes anthropology, as in the study of God consists in the study of human values, therefore the study of mankind. And most of our values are sexual, which we will get back to later.

But perhaps (and this is a very brutal idea) the level of hell that Technology produces was already partially understood by some humans. In 2019, the show titled *Chernobyl*[LXIV] garnered a lot of attention for (other than its great acting and storytelling) its depictions of death via radiation poisoning (those scenes were still inaccurate, but I believe that was due to physical limitations linked to dealing with perfectly healthy actors). Particularly, the scene in which the horribly mutilated remains of Vasily Ignatenko embrace with his pregnant wife, Lyudmila Ignatenko. The scene is shocking because of the barely human appearance of Vasily, the firefighter. It is like a horror scene. But, the reality is (and this is something I will talk about later) that this suffering that the viewer feels is emitted through the screen (the suffering of Vasily Ignatenko in a cinematic form) is nowhere near what one particular person experienced.

The 1999 Tokaimura nuclear accident (which actually proves that the assumption that nuclear energy is only incredibly dangerous when it is controlled by authoritarian governments is totally wrong, since the elite will always push their means of production to catastrophic failure) was a criticality accident at a fuel reprocessing facility of Japan Nuclear Fuel Conversion Company (JCO). Three workers, Hisashi Ouchi, Masato Shinohara, and Yutaka Yokokawa, in an attempt to save processing time, and for convenience, were instructed to mix uranium oxide and nitric acid (this reaction would normally produce uranyl nitrate) in stainless-steel buckets. The workers followed JCO operating manual guidance in this process but were unaware it was not approved by the STA, which limited the solution added to the dissolution tank to about 14% of what the team tried to pour directly into the precipitation tank. What followed was an uncontrolled, self-sustaining nuclear fission chain which resulted in a blue flash (gamma and neutron radiation, followed by Cherenkov radiation). Ouchi and Shinohara immediately began vomiting all over the floor of the facility, then went unconscious. Of the three men, only Yokokawa (who was

[LXIII] *See* Ludwig Andreas von Feuerbach, *Das Wesen des Christenthums*, Otto Wigand, 1841.
[LXIV] *See* Craig Mazin & Johan Renck, *Chernobyl*, Home Box Office, 2019.

sitting behind a glass pane at his desk) survived. Ouchi and Shinohara were both exposed to 17 and 10 sieverts of radiation respectively in a matter of milliseconds after the explosion (5 sieverts is what has been considered a lethal dose, in that the recipient would usually die within a month). Shinohara had an unpleasant, but not so brutal, 7 month long battle with radiation induced infections, after which he passed away.

But what happened to Hisashi Ouchi was much more brutal than any science-fiction could ever come up with. Ouchi suffered radiation burns to technically all of his body, experienced severe damage to his internal organs, and had a near-zero white blood cell count. But what was the worst sign of his condition were his chromosomes, which had shattered like glass, and not even one chromosome of his could be identified. This meant that none of his cells could reproduce themselves, and it was essentially up to the doctors to feed him new body parts for as long as they could.

From the 2nd day onward, Ouchi was suffering immensely. His body could no longer fight off infections, so it began to degrade and debilitate. His skin began tearing and sloughing off, and since no new skin formed, the doctors decided to treat it with gauze. But since he was sweating profusely (and at times sweating blood due to his massive organ failure), the gauze was first soaked, then dried, and ended up sticking to Ouchi's flesh, and the doctors could no longer get it off, as its removal would cause massive bleeding (he was already on transfusion at that point). His white blood cell count then dropped to zero, and the donated cells that doctors tried to put in his bloodstream were quickly destroyed by the radiation too. His intestines began to melt, and he started hemorrhaging. He started receiving transfusions (circa 20 in 24 hours) because he was leaking over 10 liters of bodily fluids per day. His muscles began falling off his bones, as his ligaments simply melted too. On his 59th day, his heart stopped 3 times in the interval of just 49 minutes. He was resuscitated continuously. He only died on his 83rd day of treatment.

During these times, Ouchi could no longer speak, as his lungs were continuously filled with the liquids his body excreted, so he had to be assisted in his breathing via intubation. His only form of communication (which he lost sometime around 30th day of treatment) was the written word. He often begged his mother to tell the doctors to not experiment on him and to stop treating him like a guinea pig. A common misconception regarding his death is that it was the doctors' fault, because they wanted to experiment with some advanced medical solutions which they had never tested on humans before. But this is categorically untrue. The team of doctors tried in every experimental way to save Ouchi's life because Japan (and in reality the whole of the Eastern hemisphere) had never (and has never since then) dealt with that severity of radiation poisoning before. The truth is that the doctors knew he had no chance of surviving, and tried to convince his family constantly to sign a Do-Not-Resuscitate order, but they refused to[LXV]. In this sense, this accident is much more tragic than it is brutal; Technology had convinced his family that It would be able to save his life. And his family, in trusting this new God of Technology (which Ouchi, Shinohara, and Yokokawa so blindly trusted in their bucket affair), induced their loved one to an amount of suffering no one human had endured before.

But none of that matters, because the truth is that even these fundamental contra-technological ideas which I am trying to discuss here are sacrificed in the name of instrumentalist practices, such as financial gain and profit. If you think of it, any idea can be sold to you. And we (especially the younger generations) now accept this sort of complacency. The anti-establishment and anti-system movements can be boiled down to images printed on a shirt and sold for a margin. The system seems so all-consuming that even the concept of being anti-exploitation is just

[LXV] *See* NHK TV Crew, *A Slow Death: 83 Days of Radiation*, Kodansha USA, 2015.

one more marketing gimmick to generate profit through exploitation. The same thing goes for the contra-technological movement. Companies will now sell you dumbphones at a marked up price because they claim it will distract you less and/or make you more productive. Anything can be boiled down to a product or a commodity.

The most compelling part of this whole sentiment is when a system based on exploitation exploits the exploitation itself. Which means that the system is so all-consuming that it will cannibalize (more on that later) itself in its search for an instrumentalist meaning (therefore a practical application or a margin) in the same way that Technology cannibalizes Itself, for example, through products (like atmosphere aerosol) which are meant to promote Technology Itself. To quote Slavoj Žižek again...

> "When we are shown scenes of starving children in Africa, with a call for us to do something to help them, the underlying ideological message is something like: "Don't think, don't politicise, forget about the true causes of their poverty, just act, contribute money, so that you will not have to think!" ".[LXVI]

That is to say; the most compelling moment of all systems is when exploitation becomes a commodity in the system itself based on exploitation via blackmail. And here I must quote English writer and theorist Mark Fisher.

> "The ideological blackmail that has been in place since the original Live Aid concerts in 1985 has insisted that 'caring individuals' could end famine directly, without the need for any kind of political solution or systemic reorganisation. It is necessary to act straight away, we were told; politics has to be suspended in the name of ethical immediacy. Bono's Product Red brand wanted to dispense even with the philanthropic intermediary. 'Philanthropy is like hippy music, holding hands', Bono proclaimed. 'Red is more like punk rock, hip hop, this should feel like hard commerce'. The point was not to offer an alternative to capitalism - on the contrary, Product Red's 'punk rock' or 'hip hop' character consisted in its 'realistic' acceptance that capitalism is the only game in town. No, the aim was only to ensure that some of the proceeds of particular transactions went to good causes. The fantasy being that western consumerism, far from being intrinsically implicated in systemic global inequalities, could itself solve them. All we have to do is buy the right products."[LXVII]

The government and the elite can convince you that the innate exploitation of the system you live in is your fault, much like victims of abuse are convinced by their aggressor that they are the problem. This is the same issue as global warming: they try to convince you that it is all your fault, because you did not recycle. But the reality is simply that their multi-million dollar private jets and their unique sports cars emit way more pollution than you could ever compensate for in one lifetime. The reality is that, if governments and the elite wanted to solve issues that concerned the common man, they would have already done it, given that they possess all the wealth on Earth. The reality is that, instead of doing what I stated, they continue to accumulate wealth, ignoring the increasing concern of human mass-extinction. The reality is that wealth inequality is the highest it has ever been. Why? Because Technology (or religion

[LXVI] Slavoj Žižek, *Through the glasses darkly*, Socialist Worker, 2009
[LXVII] Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism*, Zero Books, 2009, p. 92

in general) does not make us live well (or make us wealthier). It makes us follow an irrational ideal (that of progress) which drives us to unhappiness.

But this sort of blackmail can extend inter-systematically. When the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine happened (at least in the first 30 days, as we only cared about the novelty of that situation, like I stated), we were so concerned about sending aid to the average person that we did not even notice that our governments would have been able to do it instead of us spending our own money. If one Western nation (say France or the United States) wanted to aid the people monetarily, by giving them everything they need for their temporary stay, they would have already done it. But the truth is that they do not care. They do not care because they understand that this war can be prolonged for a practical application and a margin, after which the consequences of the war itself (destruction of homes, displaced workers who struggle to get by, etc.) can be used as a means for exploitation.

Billionaires simply do not get that much money by helping people along the way. Saying that you would help people if you had that much money is proving that same system that you hate so much right. As French-Spanish musician Manu Chao sings, "If I were Maradona, I would live just like him."[LXVIII]. In stating that you would help people in a situation where you are extremely rich (perhaps even extremely wealthy), you are implying that you will follow the rules of the game, while the elite never will and never have. The rich keep the poor exactly as poor and dumb as they are by simply selling them nothing. Which is not to say they do not sell them anything, but rather that they quite literally sell them nothing. Think about it; subscriptions are nothing more than a promise to provide you a product or some content that you can access at certain times. Here I must quote Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakunin.

> "It is the characteristic of privilege and of every privileged position to kill the mind and heart of men. The privileged man, whether practically or economically, is a man depraved in mind and heart. That is a social law which admits no exception, and is as applicable to entire nations as to classes, corporations and individuals. It is the law of equality, the supreme condition of liberty and humanity. The principle object of this treatise is precisely to demonstrate this truth in all the manifestations of social life."[LXIX]

And the reality is also that, if automation is truly happening (according to all claims by Science and Technology, this is where we are headed), the only reason you can still have a job (as difficult as it may be) is because the elite have decided to keep you around. To keep you twiddling your thumbs as you sit around and do nothing at work all day. This is an idea that American anthropologist David Graeber expertly formulated in his book titled *Bullshit Jobs: A Theory*[LXX]. The fundamental idea behind the work is that most jobs achieve absolutely nothing. And in this sense, the system totally falls apart. The economy is fake, which implies your job is fake, which implies the money is fake. None of what you experience as financial independence (which parents and teachers rave about constantly when you are about to graduate) matters or even exists.

We need to work, there is no question about it, but there is a vast difference between planting crops and hunting animals and trying to fix a computer (you have no idea how a machine like

[LXVIII] Manu Chao, *La Vida Tombola*, Because Music, 2007, English translation by Simon Milan Toth

[LXIX] Mikhail Alexandrovich Bakunin, *Selected Writings*, Grove Press, 1974, English translation by Olive Stevens & Steven Cox, p. 268.

[LXX] See David Graeber, *Bullshit Jobs: A Theory*, Simon & Schuster, 2018, p. 51.

that even functions). And so, you cannot blame yourself if you are generally adverse to work, as working for us only means work with survival as its end (which is why the hypothesis of work only being possible via coercion is totally incorrect), mediated by currency. And that same concept of currency is what disconnects us from Nature.

The modern world is therefore essentially a very elaborate scam where the elite sell you your own exploitation. The average person works 40 to 50 hours per week (consider yourself lucky if you do not work more than this) for useless and imaginary tokens that we call money. The average person thinks that all they need is money, fashionable clothes, and the newest iPhone, and that will finally make them happy and make their life meaningful and purposeful. But it is all a trick (and you should consider yourself lucky if you have ground this illusion to dust). All these so-called privileges that the average person has (contrary to the privileges that the elite have) are just mediums of enslavement. The worldwide system of exploitation is a slave master and a destroyer of our planet and our traditional, natural way of life.

However, if the economy is not fake, then it is both malevolent[LXXI][LXXII] (in that modern economies have become nothing more than disguised fiefdoms in a system of Technofeudalism, much like Yanis Varoufakis proposed[LXXIII]) and anti-human (as in, it benefits from destruction, inequality and oppression). During global crises (and the recent pandemic was no different), the rich always develop a new way to grow richer, while making the poor even poorer (in just 2020, the poorest two deciles have lost 6% of their income[LXXIV]). This is the exact addiction that Hungarian-Canadian psychologist and physician Dr. Gabor Maté talks of[LXXV]; this addiction to something (in our case, money and power/authority) that acts as a relief from the suffering of reality and of existence.

But the system is also so transcendental and meta that the act of consumption of a commodity becomes a commodity itself, through which the rich grow even richer and the poor get even poorer. Essentially, we can now consume the consumption itself (through Technology, of course). I will now quote Aleksa Vulovic and Alex Apollonov's (who both came to fame through their questionable at best stunt of going to North Korea for a haircut as a means of unveiling the truth behind western mainstream media[LXXVI]) video on this exact topic, which I have transcribed.

> "Last year was a bad time. Everything just went wrong. Australia was on fire, people started coughing all over each other and dying, and the police was scarier than ever. But it was a pretty good year for someone. In the middle of all this tragedy, for some reason, Pokémon cards increased in value five hundred times, which is faster than COVID was spreading. And everyone was looking for a way to cash in. This kicked off a weird new form of consumerism the world's never seen before. But how did this happen?

[LXXI] *Consider* Niamh McAuley, *GDP monthly estimate, UK: August 2020*, Office for National Statistics, 2020. *Consider also* Mariana da Luz Rua Rocha, *COVID-19 Pandemic Effects in United Kingdom's stock market*, Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, 2021. *Correlate with* Wall Street Journal, *Advanced Charting of FTSE 100 Index (UKX) starting 12/31/85, 2023.*

[LXXII] *Consider* Matthew Desmond, *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*, Crown Publishers, 2016.

[LXXIII] *See* Ioannis Georgiou Varoufakis, *Technofeudalism: What Killed Capitalism*, Vintage Publishing, 2023.

[LXXIV] *See* Nishant Yonzan, Christopher Lakner, & Daniel Gerszon Mahler, *Is COVID-19 increasing global inequality?*, World Bank Blogs, 2021

[LXXV] *See* Gabor Maté, *The Power of Addiction and The Addiction of Power*, TedxRio+20, 2012.

[LXXVI] *See* David Adams, *Sydney Blokes Trek To North Korea To Test Their Insane Haircut Regulations*, Pedestrian, 2017.

Well, to find out we've got to go back 30 years. Back to the first time Pokémon changed the world economy. In the olden days budgeting for a family was really easy. $50 for food, $10 for electricity, $15 for five bottles of Bailey's and $400 for bail money when dad beat the kids in a drunken rage. Which leaves about $3 for a yo-yo or some marbles to take the kids' mind off the trauma.

But this all changed in 1996 when things got really, really cool. A cute video game and cartoon came out. It's about a ten year old wildlife poacher who dreams of being the best cockfighter in the world. And he gets to abuse make-believe creatures that mankind has never abused before. The plot of the show isn't important here, what's important is Pokemon's business model.

The company discovered a revolutionary hack that altered family budgets forever. They invented merch. Or the "Making Extra Revenue From Children" hack. You see; the one thing that will never change is that kids are really, really dumb. They're indecisive, and that's why there's so many laws around, you know, not letting them do stuff that'll kill them, and not letting you do certain things with them. Yeah, I'm talking to you, Andrew, watching this video, you fucking paedophile! It's illegal. Fucking illegal, mate! Anyway...

But the Pokémon company discovered that there's no law against hypnotising kids and taking their money, so they decided to stick Pokémon on everything for the first time in history. Everything became a branding opportunity; from aeroplanes to Pokémon golf bags, band-aids, earmuffs, seat covers, even the most disgusting food in the world can be spruced up with a little bit of Pokémon.

And this unique form of marketing made it the biggest media franchise ever to exist. And suddenly there was no more money for dad's bail. It all went to cheap bits of branded plastic for the kids. And can you blame them? Pokémon hijacked the culture so thoroughly that it developed its own language. Kids became foreigners and parents couldn't understand a word they were saying. The only way to interact with your kids is to buy more Pokémon branded stuff. You know, the company kept making money and the kids just got dumber and dumber.

Now this might not seem that strange now, but at that time this level of branding had never ever happened before. Everyone was terrified. The psychologists were terrified, the christian preachers were terrified, but the bread and butter of Pokémon merchandise were the cards. The company found out that you can print out millions of identical pictures on a piece of cardboard and sell it to kids and they'll be convinced that they have to buy all of them.

Now, these cards were absolutely useless. No one played or even knew how to play the supposed card game and if you claim that you knew you're a fucking liar or a nerd, which is worse. So, yeah, no one in my school played. We just wanted to have all the cards, you know, we were just following orders.

The tagline for the show was literally a command to buy everything they could possibly sell you. But some cards were printed less than others in an attempt to make them artificially rare, which very conveniently were the cards for the coolest pokémon who were advertised in all the boss battles in the show. So, statistically

speaking, you'd have to buy thousands of Dugtrio cards before you have even a remote chance of seeing a Charizard.

And to make things worse, just when you think you've got all 896 pokémon, the company comes up with exciting new creatures to buy, like this magical chandelier creature. Any mundane household item could be a pokémon, you know. We might look at this and just see a boring fucking cup. But the geniuses of Pokémon look at it and they see a magical Sinistea. And this, it's just a keychain, right? Or is it Klefki? And then when you run out of random household items to rip off, you just put a blonde wig on already existing pokémon and, mate, you just made a billion dollars! How good is that? Pokemon actually pulled off the first and most successful merch drop in history. They made 90 billion dollars and taught every other company how to do it. Although, to be fair, companies like this are only able to make insane profits because the people who make their cheap plastic merchandise are paid next to nothing and the company isn't held responsible for all their plastic crap that ends up polluting the environment.

But after 2001 things changed. Pokemon was dying down. Some say it was because they had successfully milked every family in the world and they reached their logical limit when they started selling Pokémon penis socks. Others say that the brand struggled to recover after one of the poke-planes smashed into the World Trade Center. Either way, our relation to Pokémon changed when that first generation of consumers became adults, right? So, they just started buying adult stuff like wine, haircuts for their dogs, Oodies, 200 versions of the same barbecue and every kind of pot plant.

But for some people, it never changed. A proud subculture of full-grown adult nerds survived. They based their entire personality on following the orders of some marketing company from the 90s. They were still trying to catch them all. But I can't really blame them, you know? Sometimes I take out my old Pokémon cards and I'm mesmerised, you know? The bright colours, the clean aligned borders, the memories... It's like I beat up that kid and stole his card just this morning.

Now, the cards would, you know, fluctuate a little bit in price for the next 20 years until 2020. In the middle of a global economic crisis caused by a pandemic, Pokémon cards went through the roof. And this caused distress among adult nerds. But who gives a shit about them? The real question is: How is there so much sudden demand for these pieces of cardboard in the middle of a global crisis?

Well, some people actually made a lot of money. You see, under capitalism, the system always responds to crises by bailing out the biggest companies, bringing interest rates to zero and all those other policies that rob the poor to save the rich. All these rich people were suddenly even richer than before and they were looking for brand-new things to invest in. Pokemon cards became just another stock that they could play with. You know, buy low, sell high, hoping to ride their Pokémon stock portfolio all the way up to the level of Jeff Bezos.

On the other hand, while we assume that, you know, non-essential items are the first things to go during a global crisis, actually every time we have a crisis, the opposite thing happens. The entertainment industry always seems to thrive in these periods.

The Great Depression was also the golden age of Hollywood. And people who had any money left rushed to the cinema, trampling all the dead and starving people on the street so they could watch a nice movie and take their mind off how depressing the world was.

This industry boom happened to Nintendo during the GFC, and it's happening again now, when we're hit by another crisis in 2020. People are looking for a way to escape the horrors of the pandemic by reverting to their idiotic childhood, when their entire life revolved around thinking about useless pieces of cardboard... unless it was coughing, that one was too triggering for 2020.

This all came together in one livestream by youtuber Logan Paul. In October, 12 million people watched in awe as this guy just sat there opening Pokémon cards for two and a half hours, in the hope that one of them might be worth the big bucks. And this kind of spectacle is only possible on YouTube.

You see; back in 2010, YouTube was the birthplace of one of the most alienating forms of entertainment imaginable; unboxing. A genre of videos where people literally talk about boxes and styrofoam. How the boxes look, how they feel, how they smell.

'There is a QR code for easy reading of instructions, which I really, really like. And I also want to test something. If I have a little nibble on there, on the side here... Yeah, that's Sony's signature bitter cardboard taste.'

Unboxing videos revealed the extent of this addiction, as we're even entertained by the spectacle of someone else unboxing a new commodity. And this somehow became one of the most popular genres on the internet. And Pokémon cards have found their home in the unboxing genre. Hundreds of channels popped up where millions of people vicariously watched someone opening a packet of Pokemon cards, leaving a trail of plastic in their way.

Now, Logan Paul is obviously bigger and stronger and hotter than all those other Pokemon nerds. And he did something radically different. People weren't watching him open his own Pokémon cards. These are other people's cards.

People would purchase these cards for themselves, and then Logan Paul would step in and film himself enjoying the unboxing experience on their behalf. Now, with this one video, Logan Paul created a form of consumerism that never existed outside of pornhub.com: Cucksumerism.

The things we watch and consume have a radical effect on us as human beings but once upon a time you used to mindlessly purchase products just to enjoy the feeling of owning a new toy. But Cucksumerism means that you are now outsourcing your enjoyment of the toy to someone who can enjoy your toy more convincingly and more thoroughly than you ever could.

Opening a new commodity has become such a sacred ritual that we prefer having someone else, someone better, perform the act of enjoying a commodity than us enjoying it ourselves. And everyone seems to agree. All his friends are cheering him on as he rips your cards open. It costs you more to have him do it, but you'd give anything to have that alpha Chad's mark on your precious cards. Damn right, he broke that box. And you fucking love it! And this might be what the masters of sacred rituals, the priests, were worried about from the start...

> "Listen, I can't stress this enough. How... that everything in life is real. Everything, I assure you. What your children watch, what you watch affects you radically."

I'm scared to say it, but I think those religious weirdos had a point."[LXXVII]

And to quote Walter Benjamin, German Jewish philosopher and cultural critic (who also committed suicide provoked by his fear of Nazism, which would be justified just a few months later, making him a prophet in his own right)...

> "A religion may be discerned in capitalism – that is to say, capitalism serves essentially to allay the same anxieties, torments, and disturbances to which the so-called religions offered answers. The proof of the religious structure of capitalism – not merely, as Weber believes, as a formation conditioned by religion, but as an essentially religious phenomenon – would still lead even today to the folly of an endless universal polemic. We cannot draw closed the net in which we are caught. Later on, however, we shall be able to gain an overview of it.
>
> Nevertheless, even at the present moment it is possible to distinguish three aspects of this religious structure of capitalism. In the first place, capitalism is a purely cultic religion, perhaps the most extreme that ever existed. In capitalism, things have no meaning only in their relationship to the cult; capitalism has no specific body of dogma, no theology. It is from this point of view that utilitarianism acquires its religious overtones. This concretization of cult is connected with a second feature of capitalism: the permanence of the cult. Capitalism is the celebration of the cult '*sans rêve et sans merci*' [without dream or mercy]. There are no "weekdays". There is no day that is not a feast day, in the terrible sense that all its sacred pomp is unfolded before us; each day commands the utter fealty of each worshipper. And third, the cult makes guilt pervasive. Capitalism is probably the first instance of a cult that creates guilt, not atonement. In this respect, this religious system is caught up in the headlong rush of a larger movement. A vast sense guilt that is unable to find relief seizes on the cult, not to atone for this guilt but to make it universal, to hammer it into the conscious mind, so as once and for all to include God in the system of guilt and thereby awaken in Him an interest in the process of atonement. This atonement cannot then be expected from the cult itself, or from the reformation of this religion (which would need to be able to have recourse to some stable element in it), or even from the complete renouncement of this religion. The nature of the religious movement which is capitalism entails endurance right to the end, to the point where God, too, finally takes on the entire burden of guilt, to the point where the universe has been taken over by that despair which is actually its secret hope.
>
> Capitalism is entirely without precedent, in that it is a religion which offers not the reform of existence but its complete destruction. It is the expansion of despair, until despair becomes a religious state of the world in the hope that this will lead to salvation. God's transcendence is at an end. But he is not dead; he has been incorporated into human existence. This passage of the planet "Human" through the house of despair in the absolute loneliness of his trajectory is the ethos that

[LXXVII] Boy Boy, *Cucksumerism: Why Pokemon Sucks*, youtube.com, 2021

> Nietzsche defined. This man is the superman, the first to recognize the religion of capitalism and begin to bring it to fulfilment. Its fourth feature is that its God must be hidden from it and may be addressed only when his guilt is at its zenith. The cult is celebrated before an unmatured deity; every idea, every conception of it offends against the secret of this immaturity.
>
> Freud's theory, too, belongs to the hegemony of the priests of this cult. Its conception is capitalist religious thought through and through. By virtue of a profound analogy, which has still to be illuminated, what has been repressed, the idea of sin, is capital itself, which pays interest on the hell of the unconscious.
>
> The paradigm of capitalist religious thought is magnificently formulated in Nietzsche's philosophy. The idea of the superman transposes the apocalyptic "leap" not into conversion, atonement, purification, and penance, but into an apparently steady, though in the final analysis explosive and discontinuous intensification. For this reason, intensification and development in the sense of non facit saltum are incompatible. The superman is the man who has arrived where he is without changing his ways; he is historical man who has grown up right through the sky. This breaking open of the heavens by an intensified humanity that was and is characterised (even for Nietzsche himself) by guilt in a religious sense was anticipated by Nietzsche. Marx is a similar case: the capitalism that refuses to change course becomes socialism by means of the simple and compound interest that are functions of Schuld (consider the demonic ambiguity of this word).
>
> Capitalism is a religion of pure cult, without dogma.
>
> Capitalism has developed as a parasite of Christianity in the West (this must be shown not just in the case of Calvinism, but in the other orthodox Christian churches), until it reached the point where Christianity's history is essentially that of its parasite - that is to say, of capitalism."[LXXVIII]

Now I want you to do a reading exercise: Read the citation above, but this time try replacing the word "capitalism" with the word "Technology".

But the issue is that this sort of intelligent criticism never makes it to a form of media which allows its distribution. Criticism of the system is mostly incorrect and incoherent. Instead of a long-form critique, criticism of the system itself gets five minutes on television, during which a person who pretends to know something about the subject just goes "I don't- I uh- I think- I um...", after which they do some mental gymnastics to end up saying absolutely nothing about anything[LXXIX].

Intelligent, researched criticism (like the two citations above) does not make it to readers (presuming they know how to interpret it). When Roberto Adinolfi (then director of Ansaldo Energia of Genoa, which was then working on nuclear energy integration, but has now sold out to Shanghai Electric Corporation) was shot, the letter that his two attempted murderers sent to local papers[LXXX] was totally hidden from public view. Why? Because the criticism that the letter concentrated (which was that science and Technology has promised us a continuous golden

[LXXVIII] Walter Bendix Schönflies Benjamin, *Selected Writings Vol. 1*, Belknap Harvard Press, 1996, p. 288, English translation by Rodney Livingstone

[LXXIX] *See* Doreen Ford, *The War Against Working*, Fox News, 2022.

[LXXX] *See* Nucleo Olga, *Il Marchio Della Vita*, Corriere Della Sera, 2012.

age of mankind, which has failed, and will certainly continue to fail, to arrive for as long as we have been around) admitted no proper counterargument, and it made the letter an information hazard.

And even if this were not the case (in the sense that this sort of criticism was in clear public view and people also knew how to interpret it), our need for novelty simply cannot coexist with the anti-establishment sentiments we sometimes experience. And none of the above matters also because none of this forms any considerable criticism of Technology and Its produced religion. Questioning God is intrinsic to religion itself. Doubt fills the Holy Bible many times, and questions about faith are all but avoided throughout its passages. When Jesus Christ is laying on the cross, even he puts his faith in question.

To quote Gilbert Chesterton, English philosopher and theologian:

> "It is written, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." No; but the Lord thy God may tempt Himself; and it seems as if this was what happened in Gethsemane. In a garden Satan tempted man: and in a garden God tempted God. He passed in some superhuman manner through our human horror of pessimism. When the world shook and the sun was wiped out of heaven, it was not at the crucifixion, but at the cry from the cross: the cry which confessed that God was forsaken of God. And now let the revolutionists choose a creed from all the creeds and god from all the gods of the world, carefully weighing all the gods of the world, carefully weighing all the gods of inevitable recurrence and of unalterable power. They will not find another god who has himself been in revolt. Nay (the matter grows too difficult for human speech), but let the atheists themselves choose a god. They will find only one divinity who ever uttered their isolation; only one religion in which God seemed himself for an instant to be an atheist."[LXXXI]

And truly, the only God that has ever sacrificed is the Christian God, because he sacrificed his son to resolve the radical anxiety of mankind (who lived in Judaism at that point) by demonstrating that He loves us all. Slavoj Žižek then pushed this incredibly compelling interpretation even farther:

> "In other religions, you have God up there, we fall from God and then we try to climb back through spiritual discipline, training, good deeds, and so on, and so on. The formal of Christianity is a totally different one. As we philosophers would have put it: you don't climb to God. You are free in a Christian sense when you discover that the distance that separates you from God is inscribed into God Himself. That's why I agree with those intelligent theologians, like my favourite, Gilbert Keith Chesterton, who said that the cross and the crucifixion is something absolutely unique, because in that moment of "Eli Eli Lama Sabachthani?" - "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" - for a brief moment, symbolically, God Himself becomes an atheist. And that is something so absolutely unique; it means that you are not simply separated from God, your separation from God is part of divinity itself."[LXXXII]

All of this means that exactly when we feel separated, abandoned, forsaken, and distant from God, we are actually closest to Him. In this sense, Stephen Hawking was the Jesus Christ of

[LXXXI] Gilbert Keith Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*, John Lane & The Bodley Head, 1909, p. 254
[LXXXII] Slavoj Žižek, *Happiness: Capitalism vs Marxism*, Toronto Meridian Hall, 2019

Technology; he worked so hard for our God of Technology and yet Technology was unable to save him from his motor neurone disease and his paralysis. I will bring this concept up again when we talk about our disconnection from Nature.

And our separation from Technology is an intellectual one. We do not really comprehend Technology. Even those among us who are renowned for their expertise do not comprehend it properly. And that is because computers are so unimaginably intelligent that our brain can no longer comprehend it. Signals sent in the internals of a CPU are 20,000,000 times faster than those in the human brain. How can we even comprehend what that means? It's no wonder that Technology is greater than any one thing we can understand. To quote English-American physicist and mathematician Freeman Dyson: "God is what mind becomes when it has passed beyond the scale of our comprehension."[LXXXIII].

Another very human quality is perversion and corruption of religion. We can, and often do, twist God's words or contort them to take them out of context. And that is exactly why most Christians today no longer recognize the Bible as an authentic work. Even John of Patmos only transmitted a broken, incomplete version of his prophetic visions, because that is the nature of literature and of the spoken word.

And the same thing can be said about Technology. If Science defines Technology and technological progress, why does the progressive Left (which built itself an empirical reputation) now contradict that same science? For example, why do we insist that racism is a school of thought that is absolutely, totally wrong, yet at the same time also insist that culture has nothing to do with savagery (which would imply that savagery is exactly predetermined by race)? This is a direct contradiction of the thoughts of Malcolm X (*nota bene*, not el-Hajj Malik el-Shabazz), who fought hard for some kind of new cultural universality in the African-American community (and was of course killed by black pan-nationalists). As another example, why do we insist on non-binary gender identities, claiming that science backs up these claims or sentiments?

And by far the most human interpretation of religion is an oligarchic one, essentially. Why? Because the rich will always be closest to God. In the same way that the rich were able to buy indulgences, paying money for their sins to be forgiven by the clergy, the rich are now able to buy their way to being closer to Technology. The rich can afford the iPhone, the pinnacle of consumer electronics, as an out-of-pocket expense. And the rich will always be more represented on Technological platforms such as social media, because these platforms are what twist our image of ourselves, and therefore of mankind.

The average person is never represented in Technological media, and this is something that should not be surprising for anyone who studied the history of Art. Throughout its history, Art has mostly focused on religion and faith, and only recently we have shied away from such objectives. Art has convinced us that Jesus Christ was a muscular man with beautiful long hair and skin pale as bone. But that is categorically untrue. Jesus Christ was covered in dirt and sand. He was short. He was dark skinned. He was so skinny and malnourished that his ribs were showing and his eyes were sunken in. He was an average Levantine.

What Michelangelo failed to comprehend is that which Donatello understood profoundly, and was absolutely stomped on for realizing. Jesus Christ does not need to have massive abdominals to capture our attention, because he is the son of God. When Donatello put this idea of his into a work (which is now displayed in the Bardi Chapel of the Santa Croce Basilica), Brunelleschi told him: "But, my God, you have crucified not the body of Jesus Christ, but a peasant!". And

[LXXXIII] Freeman John Dyson, *Infinite in all directions: Gifford lectures given at Aberdeen*, Scotland, April-November 1985, Harper Perennial, 2004, p. 119

that was exactly the point. Jesus Christ would have been an average Levantine peasant, if he had not been the son of God. Brunelleschi then went on to make the same crucifix of Christ that has been seen and made millions of times: pale skin, muscular, long brown hair, and so on[LXXXIV].

And so, if in our churches Christ is not represented truthfully, then it should be no surprise that technological media does not represent the human correctly either. The teenagers on TikTok are beautiful. They are muscular, with luscious hair and clear skin. But the average teenager is not even close to this representation. The average teenager is riddled with acne, they look and speak awkwardly and they are feeble (at least compared to the teenagers on TikTok, or compared to the average 20-something year-old). The adults on Instagram are all rich. They line up and photograph themselves in front of their luxury cars, their swimming pools and their hot significant other. But the average adult is not even close to this representation. The average adult has nothing; no car, no house (therefore no pool), no spouse. And this reflects what Mutabaruka was saying in that short excerpt: We are somehow being disconnected from ourselves (which is exactly the experience God has gone through).

Much like in Christianity, it is foolish to believe that a second coming will occur, or that Jesus Christ will return. The truth is that the second coming is already here and it is infinite: every time we are somehow pushed farther away from each other (and from ourselves), Technology is here with us in spirit, under the form of the Holy Ghost.

But why must all of this be the case? In other words, why are we not like other primates? If there exists a scientific (therefore technological) explanation, then it is fundamental for understanding both Technology's and our own existences. If these values (pornography, exploitation, and violence) are what innately characterize humanity, then that must mean they are ingrained in us not from birth, but from our conception. In other words, that must mean that we, humanity, are somehow bound to these values as a value that either a human had, or they would not have offspring, which must generally relate to our evolution. One of the greatest theories (although I must remain very picky in its implications) was put forth by Buddhist monk and British writer, Oscar Maerth.

Very little is known about this man, in general. The only references to him claim that he was a Hungarian born in Vojvodina who later moved to Great Britain, then traveled the world (and by world I mean places like rural Australia, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, and Thailand) where he actively sought out rituals of cannibalism as an observer, and that he later settled near Lake Como with his wife and his three children. There was also a claim that he was a Nazi extermination camp or concentration camp survivor, but this is unconfirmable. Either way, he surely spoke Hungarian, German and English[LXXXV].

In his only work, The Beginning was the End, Maerth wrote about the same theme of cannibalism that had motivated him so much through his studies. Some of the views expressed in the book are blatantly racialist and sexist in their nature (and we can certainly argue whether these ideas came from his education in a deeply and openly nazist German-Hungarian environment shortly before the Second World War). But the real problem with Maerth is that he, being a Buddhist monk, refused to meet reality halfway in his pursuit for an evolutionary theory that would trump everything we ever knew about our ancestors.

Therefore, I would like now to limit his only work to a very simple (yet strikingly original) idea. Throughout its history, mankind has surely eaten human brain at some point. Any gen-

[LXXXIV] *See* Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori, e architettori*, Torrentino, 1550.
[LXXXV] *See* Unk., *Oscar Kiss Maerth Interview*, 1971.

eralized atrocity that can be thought of has already happened. This concept is best synthesised by a corollary of Internet Rule 36: "There will always be more fucked up shit than what you just saw."[LXXXVI]. And that is why science-fiction never hits the mark of being as disturbing as reality. George Lucas failed at making the atrocities in *Star Wars* (see Jabba Hutt and his strippers, The Great Jedi Purge, etc.) more intense than anything our reality includes.

But what Maerth implies is that mankind, through eating its own brains (in a very early stage of its existence), increased its intelligence permanently, and that this acquired intelligence also transmitted through generations[LXXXVII]. And what that means for us is that only the cannibalistic apes produced offspring, and anyone who somehow was not infected with this virus was a different primate (even though they may appear the same as us)[LXXXVIII]. But this virus reduced mankind's psychic abilities too, and this led to most humans developing insanity and making man the lunatic genius, as Maerth describes[LXXXIX]. This could explain our perpetual search for novelty and our differences from other primates.

Maerth's history of mankind may be pseudo-scientific, but it is no more and no less insane (and no more and no less in search of spirituality) than the Adam and Eve creation myth. And if this sort of theory were true, that would mean that cannibalism was some sort of genetic disease/virus (since it was carried in a trans-generational manner), which would also imply that humanity (as a collection of organisms) is truly some sort of alien (alien to us, of course) virus. In this sense, let me take a page out of American writer and visual artist William Burroughs' book, *The Electronic Revolution*.

> "I suggest that the spoken word as we know it came after the written word. We may forget that a written word is an image and that written words are images in sequence; that is to say moving pictures. My basis theory is that the written word was literally a virus that made the spoken word possible. /.../ Doktor Kurt Unruh von Steinplatz has put forward an interesting theory as to the origins and history of this word virus. He postulates that the word was a virus of what he calls biologic mutation effecting a biologic change in its host which was then genetically conveyed. One reason that apes cannot talk is because the structure of their inner throats is simply not designed to formulate words. He postulates that alterations in inner throat structure were occasioned by a virus illness..."[XC]

But other than the theory that language is a virus that our ancestors contracted at some point, language is a virus insofar as it seeps into every crack of reality. We have a word (or a series of words) to describe every one thing, from complex emotions to the most banal of structures. Language is also the only thing that creates secrets. It is therefore the reason why wars are fought, and autocracies are able to dig themselves in. Insofar as humanity is possessed by language, war reproduces itself through humanity. This is exactly the plot to Skullface's villainous plan in *Metal Gear Solid V: The Phantom Pain*, expertly written by Hideo Kojima et alia. To quote Ocelot's tape describing Skullface's plan;

[LXXXVI] Susanna Paasonen, *Carnal Resonance: Affect and Online Pornography*, MIT Press, 2011, p. 1

[LXXXVII] *See* Oscar Kiss Maerth, *The Beginning was the End*, Praeger, 1974, English translation by Judith Hayward, p. 45.

[LXXXVIII] *See* Oscar Kiss Maerth, *The Beginning was the End*, Praeger, 1974, English translation by Judith Hayward, p. 179.

[LXXXIX] *See* Oscar Kiss Maerth, *The Beginning was the End*, Praeger, 1974, English translation by Judith Hayward, p. 14.

[XC] William Seward Burroughs, *The Electronic Revolution*, Expanded Media Editions, 1970, p. 5

> "Anyway, it was in South Africa where he found renewed interest in parasites. And when he discovered the vocal cord parasites... He began to make his plan. In his eyes, the greatest symbiotic parasite the world has ever known isn't microbial. It's linguistic. Words are what keeps civilization - our world - alive. Free the world, not by taking men's lives, but by taking their tongues."[XCI]

Most languages are born in small isolated communities of farming families. Globalization and rural exodus are the greatest threat to languages as we know it. The fact that young people move to densely populated urban areas does not only mean further urban renewal and the growth of all cities (which is also why the COVID-19 pandemic, and any major virus coming in the future, was so devastating). It implies that the countryside is degrading, and together with it, its culture is disappearing. In Italy, every center of culture, down to even towns of circa 30,000 people, has its own language (calling them dialects is categorically unjust and frankly insulting, considering that they were born naturally and were not derived from Italian, which they often preceded). There are 34 main languages, with tens of thousands of local dialects. And the truth is that they are dying in favor of Italian and English.

But even those organic languages are not what our religion uses. Much like the Christian clergies use Latin (even though it is categorically defunct), we use English to talk about Technology, even though the language is outdated. The language of our new religion is multi-faceted. It is Python, C++, Java, Lua, etc. Consider that there are more than 700 programming languages[XCII], while there are over 7000 organic languages spoken today[XCIII]. And this sort of transformation is proportional. The more programming languages are created, the less organic languages remain in use[XCIV]. Artificial (technological) languages are the antithesis of language and the spoken word as we know it.

Technology, therefore, is also accompanied by the virus of homo sapiens. It seeps into every corner of existence humanity can feed It into. We automate every and all things we have the capacity to dehumanize. And Technology is a virus insofar as It is leeching what is necessary out of Nature. A Kushi Institute analysis of nutritional data collected between 1975 and 1997 found that average calcium levels in 12 fresh vegetables dropped 27%, iron levels dropped 37%, vitamin A levels dropped 21% and vitamin C levels dropped 30%[XCV]. A similar study of British nutritional data between 1930 and 1980, published in the British Food Journal, found that in 20 vegetables the average calcium content had declined by 19%, iron 22% and potassium 14%[XCVI]. Yet another study concluded that one would have to eat 8 oranges today to derive the same amount of vitamin A as our grandparents would have gotten from 1 orange alone[XCVII].

Therefore, war reproduces itself through humans. We develop Technology simply so we have more efficient weapons of destruction or more complex pornography to look at. For the most insane, those two coincide. If we are not somehow all truly insane (therefore governed by a search for novelty which we express as pornographic desires and a desire for consumption in the form of

[XCI] Hideo Kojima, *Metal Gear Solid V: The Phantom Pain*, Konami, 2015

[XCII] *See* Deepak, *List of All the 700+ Programming Languages in the World*, compile.blog, 2022.

[XCIII] *See* SIL International, *Ethnologue: Languages of the World (25th edition)*, 2023.

[XCIV] *Consider* Neil Postman, *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology*, Knopf, 1992.

[XCV] *See* Cheryl Long, *Is Chemical Farming Making Our Food Less Nutritious?*, Organic Gardening (Rodale Press), 1999.

[XCVI] *See* Anne-Marie Mayer, *Historical changes in the mineral content of fruits and vegetables*, British Food Journal (MCB University Press), 1997.

[XCVII] *See* André Picard, *Today's fruits, vegetables lack yesterday's nutrition*, The Globe and Mail, 2002.

cannibalism) on an evolutionary basis, why does the far-right grow exponentially in popularity after sustained periods of peace and general welfare? Do we really want to massacre each other that badly? Do we want anarchy and apocalyptic outcomes (since, like I established, Technology and the apocalypse always go hand in hand)? This is the concept that Reza Negarestani so expertly formulates through his character of Dr. Hamid Parsani[XCVIII]: War (more fundamentally, violence) reproduces itself through humans. I think about this very often. During the first days of the Ukraine War of 2022, I thought about an apocalyptic outcome daily (but even then, I understood that it was highly unlikely), and very often with a positive end sentiment. In the apocalypse, I thought maybe we could escape the torment of progress (even if that meant us potentially destroying the Earth, which would be the most violent act we could commit).

In this key, a psychopath is someone who, generally speaking, explicitly manifests their depraved search for novelty. They look for new people, then they get bored of them. They look for new experiences, then get used to them. I shall give you an example. Issei Sagawa was looking for a brand-new experience (which is to say something he had never done before) involving a new person (a person he had not yet gotten bored of). He shot, then chopped up and ate (after having sex with her corpse), a fellow university student, Renée Hartevelt. Sagawa had a particular manifestation of the search for novelty, which was deeply sexual and pornographic in nature. He constantly sought out pale, young and tall European women, because they were rare during his upbringing in the Japan of the 1950's. People less socially inept will not do such things. Generally, our educational system tries to beat that part out of us very early on. But in that, perhaps they beat our search for novelty even deeper into us.

And the only form of exploitation that all systems ignore is pornography. To cite the work of revolutionary American feminist and writer Andrea Dworkin in *Pornography: Men Possessing Women*:

> "Free sexuality for the woman is in being massively consumed, denied an individual nature, denied any sexual sensibility other than that which serves the male. Capitalism is not wicked or cruel when the commodity is the whore; profit is not wicked or cruel when the alienated worker is a female piece of meat; corporate bloodsucking is not wicked or cruel when the corporations in question, organized crime syndicates, sell cunt; racism is not wicked or cruel when the black cunt or yellow cunt or red cunt or Hispanic cunt or Jewish cunt has her legs splayed for any man's pleasure; poverty is not wicked or cruel when it is the poverty of dispossessed women who have only themselves to sell; violence by the powerful against the powerless is not wicked or cruel when it is called sex; slavery is not wicked or cruel when it is sexual slavery; torture is not wicked or cruel when the tormented are women, whores, cunts. The new pornography is left-wing; and the new pornography is a vast graveyard where the Left has gone to die. The Left cannot have its whores and its politics too."[XCIX]

The Left cannot have its whores and its politics too... How powerful! A feminist standing up against men owning women. It is a sight for sore eyes. She was, of course, stomped on by contemporary feminist movements for these exact ideas. And that further expresses how much pornography is a basic need of ours, for Dworkin was trying to defend the exact people that she was later attacked by: women.

[XCVIII] *See* Reza Negarestani, *Cyclonopedia: Complicity with Anonymous Materials*, re.press, 2008.
[XCIX] Andrea Rita Dworkin, *Pornography: Men Possessing Women*, Penguin Group, 1991, p. 209

But that also tools up a great meaning to pornography itself. The endpoint of all pornography is cannibalism. Issei Sagawa talked about this constantly[C]. In the end, he was so obsessed by wanting to eat a woman and devouring her flesh, that he became insatiable. He soon became impotent, and was unable to enjoy the pornography that he had feasted on for so long.

Therefore, Technology is God also because It gives us what we crave most. Not life, as we have already established, but novelty. Because what embodies both novelty and Technology more than the Internet? Endless webpages of text, music and video. It is a well of seemingly infinite novelty. But It also gives us that novelty-based item which we require for evolutionary progress: pornography. Now, I will not take stances on pornography (though I certainly have in the past), but allow me to define pornography: "Printed or visual material containing the explicit description or display of sexual organs or activity, intended to stimulate sexual excitement". If this is not a pure manifestation of novelty, I do not know what is. As humans (and believe me, as shameful as it is to admit, I also belong to this category of perverts), we are only aroused by pornography we have never, or only a few times, seen.

Oscar Maerth's theory also comprehends this profoundly, as the cannibalism our ancestors contracted not only caused their intellectual growth (and subsequent insanity), but also the inflation of their sexual desires[CI]. Therefore, Technology will ultimately adapt to our sexual ideals. One way in which this is happening is the incessant research done in cloning and genetic engineering. Genetically engineering humans (or species which are very close to humans, much like the non-cannibalistic apes I mentioned) means creating the objects of our sexual desire. I am certain that all of the researchers in genetic engineering have thought about producing an incredibly attractive human which they could have all to themselves. Firstly, this is the exact creation of the master race that Hitler and his minions proposed, and secondly, this is the exact objectification of women (and also men, let us not hold double standards) that pornography proposes. Pornography is therefore the concept where the violence of Technology and the love of God meet (which is exactly why it feels so wrong and dirty).

If Mitchell Heisman was right in supporting the theory that our future (or rather afterlife) is postbiological and supernatural[CII], then how are we not moving towards exactly that future as we speak? We are postbiological, in that we have managed to somehow go beyond what we thought conceivable in the field of Biology, and we are supernatural (for the moment) because we have transcended the laws of Nature. But there will soon be a time when our reality becomes postnatural, as we will be in a reality where we thought we would never end up (as predictable as it is, most people do not think of what the destruction of the environment means).

But this sort of theory does not explore a hypothesis which I want to get to, in that it is not applicable to ecology. This is more suited to a biologist like Oka Asajiro. He has proposed that human overspecialization is inevitably omnicidal[CIII][CIV]: detachment from nature due to growing brains will lead us to forget what reality actually is. This will lead us to a figurative evolutionary cul-de-sac, where we will get weaker and weaker physically, while our brains become unsustainable. But it will not matter because we will be able to pilot autonomous weapons with one finger, furthering our violence.

[C] *See* Issei Sagawa, 業火, 作品社, 2006.

[CI] *See* Oscar Kiss Maerth, *The Beginning was the End*, Praeger, 1974, English translation by Judith Hayward, p. 176.

[CII] *See* Mitchell Heisman, *Suicide Note*, self-published, 2010, p. 42.

[CIII] *See* Gerard Rainier Clinton Godart, *Darwin, Dharma, and the Divine: Evolutionary Theory and Religion in Modern Japan*, Hawai'i University Press, 2017.

[CIV] *But consider* Brian Daizen Victoria, *Zen at War*, Weatherhill, 1997.

And in the same way that we evolved due to cannibalistic behavior, Technology has evolved too. Except It has evolved standing on the shoulders of not cannibalism, but child labour. And, much like our humongous and ever-growing brain will at some point become unsustainable for our bodies, Technology has already hit the point of maximum dimension, and is already unsustainable as It is. I was talking to an Australian friend about how petroleum/gas companies operating in Australia were not taxed for 7 full years[CV]. And I found that absolutely mind-boggling, because it perfectly demonstrated that, much like every facet of Technology, our reliance on oil and gas is not at all sustainable while respecting laws and regulation (past respecting Nature). This is the issue with the Right; this idea that what is not broken should not be fixed is fundamentally inapplicable to our reality. There is nothing to conserve in the system we have built up so far, in that it is impossible to conserve. If the Left is choosing to apply its fundamental principles in the wrong fields, then the Right is actively violating its fundamental principles.

But that is not motive enough to blame the conservatives; after all, what can we even do to combat these changes? Can we go back? Back to when? Back to the Stone Age? When had Technology become too much (too powerful)? We do not understand the problem; we could not do anything about it if we did; and we would not do anything about it if we could.

It is natural to think that things will resolve themselves as they are. Societies (like the Minoan or the Late Bronze Age civilizations) can collapse, but that puts us into an even deeper question, which produces even more despair. Can a late-stage society even collapse? What makes us so sure that a late-stage civilization (because we are late-stage, in that we are close to our end, despite what the Kardashev scale[CVI] would have you believe) can even collapse? But even if we do not suffer some sort of societal collapse, the natural way for things to go is that the Earth reestablishes balance at some point. We can just ruin Earth to create a new ecology, since in the end, as science has established, nothing ultimately matters. Our planet will still be around, and even if it will slowly fade to a desert, perhaps life may still be around in the form of less complex (and needy) species such as insects. Either way, our ecology cannot support humanity simply because it cannot support Technology. We are in time to integrate humanity into Nature again, but a doom ecology[CVII] situation is immeasurably more probable.

[CV] *See* Ben Butler & Josh Nicholas, *Household names: 168 Australian companies have paid no tax since 2013*, The Guardian, 2021.

[CVI] *See* Nikolai Semyonovich Kardashev, *Transmission of information by extraterrestrial civilizations*, Soviet Astronomy, 1964.

[CVII] Used as such, doom ecology is a misnomer, as it is designated to describe non-anthropocentric ecologies, therefore not necessarily indicating futures deprived of lifeforms.

We do not even know where to start. But, chances are that if you picked up this book, you on a personal level are dissatisfied (maybe even disgusted) with the current state of the world. I am here to tell you that you as a person can adopt (and, as we discussed, are fundamentally obsessed with) change, even if humanity is not willing to. Now, I do not want to somehow transform this book into a self-help manual, but I do want to help you personally, not your employer. This is where most self-help books go wrong.

Adopt a Kierkegaardian theological understanding[CVIII] of Technology, and you can discover more about yourself, about how you relate to God and about Technology Itself.

If your idea of technological Heaven rests in freeing yourself of Technology, the only escape from the current system is to let go of fake desires and meaningless worries and reject It. To forge for yourself an authentic, natural, and fulfilling life, one where you are always in communion with Nature, and always in tune with yourself. It may seem far-fetched, but it is not. Just remember, you only need four crucial things to survive. You need food, water, shelter, and warmth. You need nothing else. Consumerism is the greatest enemy of the people. Subsistence is the key to fulfillment. Things are simple. We do not need nearly as much as we think we do. We have been convinced that we need things that do not relate to our survival by the elite.

When it comes to rejecting modern society and liberating yourself from the grind of the modern world it is important to take lifestyle choices very seriously, and to embrace minimalism as a means of freeing yourself from enslavement. At the end of the day, all you need is food, water, shelter, and warmth. Everything else is secondary, and to not be enslaved, it must become secondary as well.

Now, the biggest issue on the path to this fulfillment is shelter. The current housing crisis is seeing housing prices skyrocket, with many young people in particular unable to buy their own home. Additionally, the homes themselves are simply unnatural and out of touch with how humans are supposed to live. We do not need two living rooms, two bedrooms, a bathroom, a porch and a mudroom. We used to live in mud huts barely two meters long, after all.

In regards to water, food, and warmth, things are pretty simple. Somehow, the average modern person has been convinced that gas is better for heating than firewood. The average person would rather pay thousands of dollars per year on gas heating, which is terrible for the environment. Also, heating your home with gas or oil can be a headache, as whenever your furnace malfunctions or stops working, you are left in the cold with a nasty repair bill. By comparison, fire only takes a match, two sticks, or a flint striker to create and never stops unexpectedly. Additionally, it also forces you to engage in a minimal amount of exercise.

I will go Dale Carnegie[CIX] for you (even though my advice is generally not sound). Start small. Ditch your smartphone for a week. Sell your television. Limit your computer usage. Go outside more, whether it is to get a tan, play in the snow or just listen to the birds chirp. You can do all of this. In fact, you are the only one that can do this to yourself.

[CVIII] *Consider* Søren Aabye Kierkegaard, *Sygdommen til Døden*, C.A. Reitzels Forlag, 1849. *Consider also* Søren Aabye Kierkegaard, *Kjerlighedens Gjerninger*, C.A. Reitzels Forlag, 1847.

[CIX] *See* Dale Breckenridge Carnegie, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, Simon & Schuster, 1936.

Now, since I want to end this book on a somewhat positive note, I will leave you with a song (or a poem, if you so like), courtesy of Québécois folk music group Mes Aïeux (keep in mind that this is a translated and slightly modified version, which means its rhyme scheme has been altered).

"Your great-great-granddad cleared a plot of land,
Your great-grandfather, he plowed it all by hand,
And your grandfather made the whole land thrive,
And your father sold it all for a city 9 to 5.
As for you, young man, in the city all alone,
In an expensive apartment that chills you to the bone,
On the coldest nights, you dream of a shovel in your hand,
As you clear yourself your little plot of land.
Your great-great-grandma had 14 kids to raise,
And your great-grandma just about followed in her ways,
And your grandma had three; it was just sufficient,
And your ma only had one; you were an accident.
As for you, young ma'am, with different partners every night,
And when things go wrong, abortion makes them right,
But there are some mornings when you wake up in tears,
When you can hear the sound of a kid that seems your child.
Your great-great-grandpa lived in misery,
Your great-grandpa collected pennies,
And your grandpa - miracle! - became a millionaire,
And your pa inherited it and put it all in his RRSP.
As for you, young man, you owe your soul to the government,
Not a chance to get a loan from a banking establishment,
To calm your resolve to rob the cashier,
You read books from simple scrutineers.
Your great-great-grandparents, they knew how to throw down,
Your great-grandparents went-a swinging through the town,
And your grandparents danced to Ye-Ye all night,
For your parents, it was disco, love at first sight.
As for you, my friend, how do your evenings go?
Just turn off your TV and get away from its glow,
And luckily in life, some things refuse to change under any circumstance,
So put on your nicest clothes; because tonight we're going out to dance!"[CX]

[CX] Mes Aïeux, *Dégénérations*, Disques Victoire, 2006, English translation by Marilou & Simon Milan Toth

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR READING!